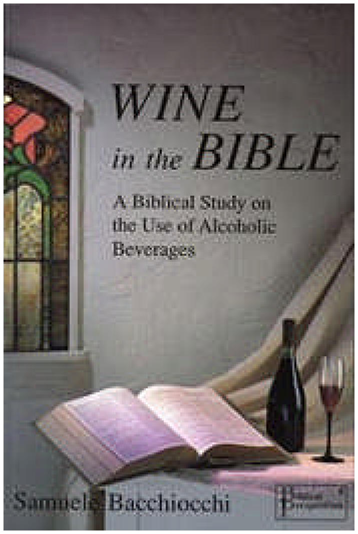


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WINE IN THE BIBLE: A BIBLICAL STUDY ON THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

A PREVIEW OF *WINE IN THE BIBLE*

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D., Andrews University

A comment I often hear when meeting readers of my books in different parts of the world, goes something like this: "I enjoyed immensely your book on . . . , but I must confess that I haven't finished reading it yet." Reading only a portion of a book often means missing what could be the most important part of its content and failing to gain a complete picture of the subject presented.

Partly out of consideration toward those readers whose busy lifestyle makes it difficult to read a book through systematically to the end, and partly out of a desire to give at the outset an overview of the issues discussed, I decided to try something new. Instead of giving a summary of this book at the end by way of conclusion, I am presenting a preview of its content at the beginning. The concept of a preview is hardly new. The underlying assumption is that if a person likes the preview, he or she will be motivated to purchase the product. Applied to this study, it is my hope that an introductory preview will accomplish two objectives: (1) provide an overview of the various issues examined and conclusions reached; (2) stimulate readers to read the whole book to gain a fuller understanding of the many issues discussed.

This book addresses from a Biblical perspective the most prevailing, costly and destructive habit of our society, the drinking of alcoholic beverages.

A Look at the Drinking Problem. The study begins in Chapter 1 with a look at the drinking problem in America today and our Christian responsibility toward it. The drinking of alcoholic beverages by over 100 million Americans is rightly regarded by social analysts as America's number-one public enemy. This "beloved enemy," as Jack Van Impe calls it,1 claims at least 100,000 American lives per year, 25 times as many as all

100,000 American lives per year, 25 times as many as all illegal drugs combined.2

The economic cost to the American society of the use of alcohol is estimated by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at $117 billion a year.3 This staggering figure includes the cost of premature deaths, reduced production and special treatments.

The real human cost of alcohol, however, transcends any statistical estimate of deaths, disabilities or dollar figures. A 1987 Gallup Poll indicates that 1 in 4 families are troubled by alcohol.4 This means that more than 61 million Americans are affected by some alcohol-related problems such as retarded children, divorce, violence in the home, crime, sickness and death.

A Christian Responsibility. Christian churches bear considerable responsibility for the inestimable human and economic costs of alcohol, because through their beliefs, teachings and preaching they are able to influence the moral values and practices of society, possibly more than does any other institution. For example, in the early part of this century evangelical churches played a major role in influencing the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States on January 16, 1919, outlawing the "manufacture, sale or transportation" of alcoholic beverages.

Since the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, however, most churches have abandoned their stand for total abstinence, encouragin " moderation" instead. Unfortunately, moderation has led over 18 million Americans to become immoderate drinkers,5 because alcohol is a habit-forming narcotic which weakens one’s capacity for self-control.

The moderationist position rests on the belief that Scripture condemns the *immoderate use* of alcohol but approves its *moderate use.* This belief is in turn based on the assumption that the Bible knows only of fermented wine ("one wine theory") which it considers as a divine blessing to be enjoyed with moderation. According to this theory, any condemnation of wine in the Bible refers not to the *kind* of wine, but to the *amount* consumed.

Moral or Medical Issue? By maintaining that the Bible sanctions the moderate use of alcoholic beverages, moderationists have led people to believe that drinking alcohol is not a *moral* but a *medical* issue. It is not a transgression of a God-given principle, but a habit which can harm one's health, if abused. The elimination of any sinful connotation from the use of alcohol has had an enormous influence on the drinking habits of millions of Christians. It has provided Christians with an alleged Biblical and moral justification for drinking alcohol, thus depriving them of a Biblical and moral conviction for abstaining from intoxicating beverages.

In view of the immense influence the moderationist view has had on the drinking habits of millions of Christians, the major objective of this study has been to examine its fundamental assumption, namely, that the Bible sanctions a moderate use of alcoholic beverages. Since this assumption is dictated by the belief that the terms for "wine" in the Bible always mean "fermented wine," I began this investigation by ascertaining the Biblical and historical usage of such terms.

The Meaning of "Wine." The objective of the survey conducted in Chapter 2 was to ascertain if the terms used for "wine" in the Bible denote exclusively fermented wine or inclusively either fermented or unfermented wine. I traced the usage of the word "wine" backward, from English, to Latin, Greek and finally to Hebrew. The survey shows that the four related words—*wine* in English, *vinum* in Latin, *oinos* in Greek and *yayin* in Hebrew—have been used historically to refer to the juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented. This significant finding discredits the claim that the Bible knows only fermented wine, which it approves when used moderately. The truth of the matter is that the Bible knows both fermented wine, which it disapproves, and unfermented grape juice, which it approves.

"Wine" in Biblical Perspective. Building on the conclusions reached in Chapter 2, I proceeded in Chapter 3 to examine the reasons for the Biblical approval and disapproval of wine. What I found is that the positive

references to "wine" have to do with unfermented and unintoxicating grape juice. Because of its natural and nourishing properties, grape juice was fittingly used to represent the divine blessing of material prosperity (Gen 27:28; 49:10-11; Deut 33:28), the blessing of the messianic age (Joel 2:18-19; Jer 31:10-12; Amos 9:13, 14), the free offer of God's saving grace (Is 55:1), the wholesome joy God offers to His people (Ps 104:14-15; 4:7), and the acknowledgment of God through the use of grape juice as tithe, offerings and libations (Num 18:12; Deut 14:23; Ex 29:40; Lev 23:13).

On the other hand, the negative references to "wine" have to do with fermented and intoxicating wine. Some of the reasons Scripture condemns the use of alcoholic beverages are that they distort the perception of reality (Is 28:7; Prov 23:33); they impair the capacity to make responsible decisions (Lev 10:9-11); they weaken moral sensitivities and inhibitions (Gen 9:21; 19:32; Hab 2:15; Is 5:11-12); they cause physical sickness (Prov 23:20-21; Hos 7:5; Is 19:14; Ps 60:3); and they disqualify for both civil and religious service (Prov 31:4-5; Lev 10:9-11; Ezek 44:23; 1 Tim 3:2-3; Titus 1:7-8).

The Preservation of Wine. A major objection against the view that Scripture approves the use of unfermented grape juice is the alleged impossibility in Bible times of preserving grape juice unfermented. Thus, I devoted Chapter 4 to probing this popular assumption by investigating the testimonies of ancient writers regarding the art of preserving fruits and wines in general and grape juice in particular. To my surprise I discovered that the ancients were far more knowledgeable in the art of preserving fruits and wines than is generally believed.

Contrary to popular opinion, the problems the ancients encountered in preserving fermented wine were as great as, if not actually greater than, those faced in preserving unfermented grape juice. To prevent fermented wine from becoming acid, moldy, or foul-smelling, vintners used a host of preservatives such as salt, sea-water, liquid or solid pitch, boiled-down must, marble dust, lime, sulphur fumes and crushed iris.

In comparison to preserving fermented wine, preserving

In comparison to preserving fermented wine, preserving grape juice unfermented was a relatively simpler process. It was accomplished by boiling down the juice to a syrup, or by separating the fermentable pulp from the juice of the grape by means of filtration, or by placing the grape juice in sealed jars which were immersed in a pool of cold water, or by fumigating the wine jars with sulphur before sealing them. The use of such techniques clearly indicates that the means of preserving grape juice without fermentation were known and used in the ancient world. This conclusion is indirectly supported by the teachings and example of Jesus.

Jesus and Wine. The next logical step was to examine the major wine-related stories or sayings of Jesus since these are commonly used to prove that Christ *made, commended, used and even commanded* the use of alcoholic wine. In Chapter 5 I went into considerable detail to examine these claims. The conclusion of my analysis is that they are devoid of textual, contextual and historical support.

The "good wine" Jesus *made* at Cana (John 2:10) was "good" not because of its high alcoholic content, but because it was fresh, unfermented grape juice. This is indicated by external and internal considerations. Externally, contemporary authors, such as Pliny and Plutarch, attest that "good wines" were those which did not intoxicate, having had their alcoholic potency removed. Internally, moral consistency demands that Christ could not have miraculously produced between 120 to 160 gallons of intoxicating wine for the use of men, women and children gathered at the Cana's wedding feast, without becoming morally responsible for prolonging and increasing their intoxication. Scriptural and moral consistency requires that "the good wine" produced by Christ was fresh, unfermented grape juice. This is supported by the very adjective used to describe it, namely *kalos*, which denotes that which is morally excellent, instead of *agathos*, which means simply good.

The "new wine" Jesus *commended* through the parable of the new wineskins (Luke 5:37-38; Mark 2:22) was unfermented must, either boiled or filtered, because not even new wineskins could withstand the pressure of the

even new wineskins could withstand the pressure of the gas produced by fermenting new wine.

The self-description of Jesus as "eating and drinking" (Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34) does *not* imply that He *used* alcoholic wine, but rather that He freely associated with people at their meals and elsewhere. The phrase "eating and drinking" was used idiomatically to describe Christ’s social lifestyle.

The "fruit of the vine" Christ *commanded* to be used as a memorial of His redeeming blood (Matt 26:28-29; Mark 14:24-25) was not fermented wine, which in the Scripture represents human depravity and divine indignation, but pure unfermented grape juice, which is a fitting emblem of Christ’s untainted blood shed for the remission of our sins. This conclusion was established through a study of the language of the Last Supper, the Jewish Passover wine, the Passover law of fermentation, the consistency of the symbol and the survival of the use of unfermented grape juice at the Lord’s Supper. Most telling is the fact that Josephus calls the freshly squeezed grape juice "the fruit of the vine." This establishes unequivocally that the phrase was used to designate the sweet, unfermented juice of the grape. The evidences submitted shows that Jesus abstained from all intoxicating substances and gave no sanction to His followers for using them.

Wine in the Apostolic Church. The way the Apostolic Church understood, preached and practiced the teachings of Jesus and of the Old Testament regarding the use of alcoholic beverages provides a most valuable verification and clarification as to whether Scripture teaches moderation or abstinence. In view of the fundamental importance attached to the witness of the Apostolic Church, my next logical step was to examine in Chapter 6 the apostolic teachings regarding the use of wine in particular and of intoxicating substances in general.

This investigation proved to be the most rewarding. Contrary to the prevailing perception, I found that the New Testament is amazingly consistent in its teaching of abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages. The very passages often used to support the moderationist view, under close scrutiny were found to negate such a view.

under close scrutiny were found to negate such a view, teaching abstinence instead. For example, the irony of the mockers' charge that on the day of Pentecost the apostles were drunk on *gleukos*, that is, on the grape juice which apparently was their common beverage (Acts 2:13), provides an indirect but important proof of their abstmious life-style and inferentially of the life-style of their Master. There would have been no point in the mockers' attributing to unfermented grape juice the cause of the disciples' strange actions, if it was not common knowledge that the apostles abstained from intoxicating wine. The intended jibewas that the disciples were such naíve simpletons they got drunk on grape juice!

Similarly, Paul's reference to drunkenness at the communion table of the Corinthian church (1 Cor 11:21) offers no support for a moderate use of alcoholic wine, for two reasons. First, whatever was done at Corinth was a departure from the instructions Paul had delivered to the church (1 Cor 11:23); thus, the Corinthians' conduct constitutes a warning rather than an example for us. Second, a study of the meaning of the verb *methuo* ("satiated") and of the implications of Paul's admonitions, clearly suggests that the problem at Corinth was indulgence in eating rather than intoxication with alcoholic wine.

I found one of the most powerful Biblical indictments against intoxicating wine in Ephesians 5:18, where Paul condemns wine as the cause of debauchery and shows the irreconcilable contrast between the spirit of wine and the Holy Spirit of God. To my great surprise, however, I found that most English translations and commentaries have chosen to translate or interpret Ephesians 5:18 by making "drunkenness" rather than "wine" the cause of debauchery. This was surprising to me because not only the Catholic and Protestant Italian translations, with which I am most familiar, but also numerous other ancient and modern translations, all translate Paul's text as saying that in the very nature of wine is debauchery. It seems that some English translators had such a predilection for wine that they decided, to borrow the words of Ernest Gordon, to "save the face of wine while condemning drunkenness."6

The translators’ bias toward wine became most evident in the study of the apostolic admonitions to abstinence, expressed through the verb *nepho* and the adjective *nephalios*. The first meaning of the verb is "to abstain from wine" and of the adjective "abstinent, without wine." Yet these words have been consistently translated with their secondary sense of being "temperate, sober, steady," rather than by their primary sense of being "abstinent." Such biased and inaccurate translations have misled many sincere Christians into believing that the Bible teaches moderation in the use of alcoholic beverages, rather than abstinence from them.

It was equally surprising for me to discover that the fundamental reason given by Peter and Paul for their call to a life of mental vigilance and physical abstinence is eschatological, namely, preparation to live in the holy presence of Christ at His soon Coming. This reason has added significance for Christians like the Seventh-day Adventists, who accept the Biblical teachings on the Second Advent literally rather than existentially, that is, as a future realization of our present expectations rather than a present experience of the future. To abstain from intoxicating substances represents a tangible response to God’s invitation to make concrete preparation for the physical return of Christ. The analysis of the apostolic teachings regarding alcoholic beverages presented in Chapter 6, the longest in the book, provides in my view the most compelling defense of the Biblical principle of abstinence from intoxicating beverages.

Some Misunderstood Passages. To be fair to those who find support for their moderationist position in certain Biblical passages, I devoted Chapter 7 to an extensive analysis of five of such passages. The study of each text in the light of its immediate and larger context, the historical customs of the time and the overall teaching of Scripture, has shown that none of them contradict the Biblical imperative for abstinence. On the contrary, some of them indirectly but conclusively support abstinence.

Proverbs 31:6, for example, suggests in an ironical fashion that alcoholic beverages are only suited for killing the excruciating pain of someone who is dying. Similarly

excruciating pain of someone who is dying. Similarly, Hosea 4:11 provides no justification for a moderate use of alcoholic beverages for two reasons. First, because "wine and new wine" are mentioned figuratively, as representative of the good gifts God had provided to the children of Israel, gifts which they had used for idolatrous purposes. Second, even if "wine and new wine" were alcoholic, they are condemned in the text for taking away understanding, irrespective of the quantity used.

In a different yet equally convincing way, 1 Timothy 5:23 supports the principle of abstinence in two significant ways. First, the advice, "No longer drink *only* water," implies that Timothy, like the priests and Nazirites, had abstained until that time from both fermented and unfermented wines, presumably in accordance with the instructions and example of Paul. Second, the apostle recommended to Timothy to use only a *little* wine, not for the physical pleasure of the belly, but for the medical need of the stomach. Ancient writers such as Aristotle, Athanaeus, and Pliny indicate that unfermented wine was known and preferred to alcoholic wine for medical purposes, because it did not have the side effects of the latter. In the light of these testimonies and of the other Biblical teachings regarding wine, it is reasonable to assume that the wine recommended by Paul for medical use was unfermented grape juice.

The conclusion of this whole study on the Biblical teaching regarding the use of alcoholic beverages can be summarized in one sentence: Scripture is consistent in teaching moderation in the use of wholesome, unfermented beverages and abstinence from the use of intoxicating fermented beverages.

Ellen White and Alcoholic Beverages. In view of the major influence exerted by Ellen G. While in the adoption of the Biblical principle of abstinence from alcoholic beverages by the Seventh-day Adventist church, I felt it appropriate to examine in Chapter 8 her understanding of Christian temperance in general and of abstinence in particular.

The study reveals that for Ellen White the message of temperance was a fundamental part of the gospel and of

temperance was a fundamental part of the gospel and of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Such a message entails teaching people moderation in the use of healthful things and abstinence from the use of harmful things such as alcoholic beverages.

Ellen White deeply believed that total abstinence is a principle clearly taught in the Scripture by warnings and examples. Disregard for this principle represents a violation of the law of God. Obedience to this principle, through Christ's enabling power, contributes to the restoration of God's moral image in us. This restoration is an essential part of our preparation for Christ's return.

Ellen White discusses at great length the harmful effects of the use of alcoholic beverages upon the individual, the home and society at large. The ill effects upon the drinker are mental, moral and physical. As for the home, the use of alcoholic beverages often deprives families of their basic necessities, and fosters violence and the abuse of children. With reference to society, Ellen White finds alcohol consumption to be an incentive to crime, a major cause of accidents and of public-health problems. The theological convictions and practical counsels of Ellen White on the use of alcoholic beverages stand out, in my view, for their Biblical consistency and their practical relevance to our time.

Alcohol in America. To help the reader appreciate from a social and medical perspective why the Bible condemns the use of alcoholic beverages, I have devoted Chapter 9 to a brief survey of the social and medical consequences of alcohol consumption in American society. The survey indicates that the cost of alcohol use to the American people is appallingly high, not only in economic terms ($117 billion per year), but also in terms of human pain, misery, violence, child and spouse abuse, divorces, crime, sickness and death. It is inconceivable to think that at least 100,000 human lives are lost every year in America alone because of alcohol-related problems.

If America wants to deal effectively with the tragedy of alcohol, it must develop an entirely new cultural attitude through the aggressive promotion of abstinence. Christians can play a vital role in this endeavor, if they

recover the Biblical imperative for abstinence. It is only when Christians recognize and accept the fact that drinking alcoholic beverages is not only physically harmful, but also Biblically and morally wrong, that they are likely to feel compelled, not only to abstain from intoxicating substances themselves, but also to help others do likewise.

NOTES ON PREVIEW

1. The phrase "beloved enemy" is used by Jack Van Impe repeatedly in his book, *Alcohol: The Beloved Enemy* (Royal Oak, Michigan, 1980).

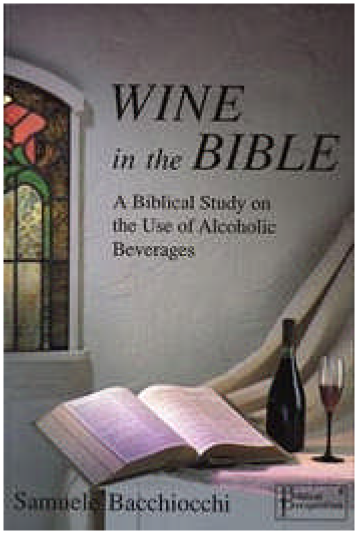
2. The figures are provided by the 1986 report of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, as quoted in "Coming to Grips with Alcoholism," *U.S. News & World Report* (November 30, 1987):56.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 57.

5. Ibid., p. 56.

6. Ernest Gordon, *Christ, the Apostles and Wine* (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 31.



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WINE IN THE BIBLE: A BIBLICAL STUDY ON THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Chapter 2

THE MEANING OF "WINE"

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"Why devote a chapter of this book to the definition of "wine"? Everybody knows that wine is the fermented juice of grapes! Such a surprise is understandable because most of today's English dictionaries define"wine" as "fermented grape juice" or "the fermented juice of grapes," making no allowance for unfermented grape juice to be called "wine."

The universally accepted definition of "wine" as "fermented grape juice" may well explain why many Bible believing Christians have come to believe that the "wine" mentioned in the Bible must in all instances be alcoholic. This assumption, known as the "one wine theory," has greatly prejudiced the study of the Biblical teachings on the use of alcoholic beverages by leading many sincere Christians to believe that God approves the moderate use of fermented, intoxicating wine. The reasoning can best be illustrated syllogistically, as follows:

1. The Bible, like today's English language, knows only of alcoholic wine.

2. Wine is praised in the Bible as a gracious divine blessing.

3. Therefore, the Bible approves the moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The problem with this syllogism is that its first premise is very wrong. As this chapter will show, the Bible knows of two distinctly different grape beverages: the first, *unfermented*, refreshing and lawful; the second, *fermented*, intoxicating and unlawful. This view of two

kinds of wines in the Bible is flatly denied by numerous scholars. Dunlop Moore states emphatically: "The theory of two kinds of wine—the one fermented and intoxicating and unlawful, and the other unfermented, unintoxicating, and lawful—is a modern hypothesis, devised during the present century, and has no foundation in the Bible, or in Hebrew or classical antiquity."1 An even stronger denial of the two wines theory is found in E. W. Bullinger's *The Companion Bible*, which says: "The modern expression, 'unfermented wine,' is a contradiction of terms. If it is wine, it must be fermented. If it is not fermented, it is not wine, but a syrup."2

Objective of Chapter. We intend in this chapter to examine if indeed the theory of two kinds of wine has no Biblical and historical foundation, as many contend. To some readers this investigation may seem rather technical and not directly related to the study of the Biblical teaching on alcoholic beverages. Yet, this investigation is essential to understand what the Bible has to say on this timely subject. In fact, our conclusion regarding the secular and Biblical usage of the term "wine" will enable us to clarify the apparent contradiction between those Biblical passages commending and those condemning the use of wine.

Procedure. The procedure we shall follow is to trace the secular usage of the word "wine" backward, from English, to Latin, Greek and finally Hebrew. This historical survey across four languages is justified by the fact that the English word "wine" is directly related linguistically to the Latin *vinum*, the Greek *oinos*, and the Hebrew *yayin*. The relationship of sound and look between these words becomes clearer when we place these respective words side by side without the case ending *um* for the Latin *vin* (um), *os* for the Greek *oin*(os) and without the prefix *ya* for the Hebrew (ya)*yin* (originally *yayin*). Without the case endings or suffix these four words look like this: *wine, vin, oin, yin.* The linguistic relationship among them is self-evident. They all have a similar stem in common. This indicates that it is the *sound* of the same word which has been transliterated rather than the equivalent *meaning* which has been translated with a different word.

In view of their similarity in sound and look we must ascertain what these related words actually mean in the various languages. We shall conduct our investigation beginning with the usage of the word "wine" in the English language and then move backward to the Latin *vinum* to the Greek *oinos* and finally to the Hebrew *yayin*. We trust that this procedure will help the Bible reader to see the historical continuity existing in the secular and Biblical usage of this one-related-word as a designation for both fermented and unfermented grape juice.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first examines the secular usage of wine, *vinum, oinos,* and *yayin*. The second considers the Biblical usage of the Greek *oinos* and the Hebrew *yayin*.

PART I: SECULAR USAGE OF THE WORD "WINE"

1. The Meaning of "Wine" in English

Current Usage of "Wine." Most people assume today that the word "wine" can refer only to fermented, intoxicating grape juice, or to the fermented juice of any fruit used as beverage. The basis for this assumption is the current definition given to the word by most modern dictionaries. For example, the seventh edition of the *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines "wine" as follows: "1: fermented grape juice containing varying percentages of alcohol together with ethers and esters that give it bouquet and flavor. 2: the usu. fermented juice of a plant product (as a fruit) used as a beverage. 3: something that invigorates or intoxicates." Note that no mention at all is made in this current definition of unfermented grape juice as one of the possible meanings of "wine." It is not surprising that people who read a definition such as this, common to most dictionaries, would naturally assume that "wine" can only mean a fermented juice.

Past Usage of "Wine." This restrictive meaning of "wine" represents, however, a departure from the more classical dual meaning of the word as a designation for both fermented or unfermented grape juice. To verify this fact one needs only to consult some older dictionaries. For example, the 1955 *Funk & Wagnalls New "Standard"*

example, the 1955 *Funk & Wagnalls New "Standard" Dictionary of the English Language* defines "wine" as follows: "1. The fermented juice of the grape: in loose language the juice of the grape whether fermented or not." This definition shows that forty years ago the loose usage of "wine" referred to "the juice of the grape whether fermented or *not*." It is noteworthy that even the more recent *New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (1971) defines "must" as "Wine or juice pressed from the grapes but not fermented." This definition clearly equates "wine" with grape juice.

The 1896 *Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language* which defines "wine" as "the expressed juice of grapes, especially when fermented . . . a beverage . . . prepared from grapes by squeezing out their juice, and (usually) allowing it to ferment." This definition is historically accurate, since it recognizes that the basic meaning of "wine" is "the expressed juice of grapes," which is usually, but not always, allowed to ferment.

"The problem," as Robert Teachout points out, "is that people have taken the very *usual* meaning of the word (whether in Hebrew, Greek, Latin or English)—as an intoxicating beverage—and have made it the *only* definition of the word. That is incorrect scholarship! It is inaccurate both biblically and secularly, and it is inaccurate in the English language historically."3

Older English Dictionaries. The inaccuracy in the English language becomes even more evident when we look at older English dictionaries. For example, the 1828 *Webster's Dictionary* defines the word "must" as *"new wine*—wine pressed *from* the grape, but not fermented."4 Note that the unfermented grape juice is here explicitly called "new wine."

The 1759 Nathan Bailey's *New Universal English Dictionary of Words and of Arts and Sciences* offers the following definition for "wine": "Natural wine is such as it comes from the grape, without any mixture or sophistication. Adulterated wine is that wherein some drug is added to give it strength, fineness, flavor, briskness, or

some other qualification."5 Note that in this definition Bailey does not use the word "fermented," though it is implied in some of the wines he describes.

Other eighteenth-century lexicographers define the word "wine" very similarly. John Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum, or A General English Dictionary,* published in London in 1708, says: "Wine, a liquor made of the juice of grapes or other fruits. Liquor or Liquour, anything that is liquid; Drink, Juice, etc. Must, sweet wine, newly pressed from the grape."6 In this definition "wine" explicitly includes "must, sweet wine, newly pressed from the grape."

Benjamin Marin's *Lingua Britannica Reformata or A New English Dictionary,* published in 1748, defines "wine" as follows: "1. the juice of the grape. 2. a liquor extracted from other fruits besides the grape. 3. the vapours of wine, as wine disturbs his reason."7 It is noteworthy that here the first meaning of "wine" is "the juice of the grape," without any reference to fermentation.

A clear example of the use of the term "wine" to refer to unfermented grape juice is provided by William Whiston's translation of Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews,* first published in 1737. Referring to Joseph's interpretation of the cupbearer's dream, Josephus writes: "He therefore said that in his sleep he saw three clusters of grapes hanging upon three branches of a vine, large already, and ripe for gathering; and that he squeezed them into a cup which the king held in his hand and when *he had strained the wine*, he gave it to the king to drink . . . Thou sayest that *thou didst squeeze this wine from three clusters of grapes* with thine hands and that the king received it: know, therefore, that the vision is for thy good."8

In this translation Whiston uses "wine" as a proper rendering for fresh, unfermented grape juice (*gleukos*), obviously because in this time "wine" meant either fermented *or* unfermented grape juice. Josephus' statement offers another significant insight, namely, that it was customary long before Israel became a nation to squeeze the juice from grapes and drink it immediately in its fresh, unfermented state. This is what Josephus called *gleukos*, the term which our English translators render

gleukos, the term which our English translators render "wine" or "new wine" in Acts 2:13. Does not this translation support the conclusion that unfermented grape juice was called "wine" in older English usage?

Bible Translations. The above sampling of definitions of "wine" from older English dictionaries suggests that when the King James Version of the Bible was produced (1604-1611) its translators must have understood "wine" to refer to both fermented and unfermented wine. In view of this fact, the King James Version's uniform translation of the Hebrew *yayin* and Greek *onios* as "wine" was an acceptable translation at that time, since in those days the term could mean either fermented or unfermented wine, just as the words it translates (*yayin* or *oinos*) can mean either. Today, however, when "wine" has assumed the sole meaning of fermented grape juice, modern translations of the Bible should indicate whether the text is dealing with fermented or unfermented grape juice. By failing to provide this clarification, uninformed Bible readers are misled into believing that all references to "wine" in the Bible refer to fermented grape juice.

2. The Meaning of the Latin *Vinum*

Latin Usage *of Vi*num. It is significant that the Latin wo*rd* *vi*num, from which the English "wine" derives, was also used to refer to fermented or unfermented grape juice. A large four-volumes Latin lexico*n, Thesaurus Linguae Latin*ae, published in 1740, gives several definitions f*or* *vi*num, all supported by ancient Roman authors. Two of these are especially relevant*: "Aigleuces vi*num—("sweet wine"), *"Defrutum vin*um—("boiled wine"), both of which are unfermented grape juice.9 The lexicon further explains that "vinum vocantur ipsae etiam uvae"—("even the very grapes are called wine"). The latter statement is supported by Marcus Cato's designation of grape juice as "*vinum pendens*," that is, "wine still hanging on the grapes."10

Parkinson in his *Theatrum Botanicum* published in 1640, explains that "The juyce or liquor pressed out of the ripe grapes, is called *vinum*, *wine*. Of it is made both *sapa* and *defrutum*, in English *cute*, that is to say, boiled wine, and both made of *mustum*, *new wine*; the latter boyled to the

both made of *mustum, new wine*, the latter boyled to the halfe, the former to the third part."11 This explanation is significant because it attests that the juice pressed out of ripe grapes was called "*vinum*, wine," and when boiled it became "*sapa*" or "*defrutum*," depending on how much it was boiled down.12

Pliny (A. D. 24-79), the renowned Roman scholar and author of the celebra*ted Natural Histo*ry, lists the boiled wines *sapa* and *defrutum* among the *vinum dulce*—"sweet wine." To these he adds other kinds of unfermented sweet wines known *as semper mustum*—"permanent must,*" passum*—"raisin wine," and *militite*s—"honey-wine." The last was made from must "in the proportion of thirty pints of must of a dry quality to six pints of honey and a cup of salt, this mixture being brought to the boil."12

W. Robertson in his *Phraseologia Generalis*, published in 1693, defines the Latin *mustum* as "new wine" and the phrase *vinum penden*s as "wine yet on the tree."13 Thomas Aquinas, the "Angelic Doctor" of the Roman Catholic Church, explains that "grape juice—*mustum*" can be used for the Eucharist, because it already "has the specific quality of wine [*speciem vini*]."14

The foregoing examples suffice to show that the Latin word *vinum*, like its derived English *wine*, has been historically used to refer either to fermented or unfermented grape juice. Further documentation from ancient Roman writers supporting this conclusion will be given in Chapter 4, where we shall examine the ancient methods for preserving wine unfermented.

3. The Secular Usage of the Greek *Oinos*

***Oinos:* Only Fermented Grape Juice?** It is widely believed that both in secular and Biblical Greek the wor*d oin*os, from which derive both the Latin *vinum* and the English *wine*, meant exclusively fermented grape juice. For example, in his book *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages,* Kenneth L. Gentry states: "Classical Greek—the historical forerunner of the New Testament *(koin*e) Greek—employs the term as a fermented beverage. The

Greek" employs the term as a fermented beverage. The Liddell and Scott *Greek-English Lexicon* of classical Greek defines *oinos* as 'the fermented juice of the grape.' Interestingly, classical Greek apparently used *oinos* as a functional equivalent for 'fermented juice,' as Liddell and Scott note . . ."15 Gentry goes on quoting New Testament lexicographers to show that "no major New Testament lexicon disputes the fermented character of *oinos*."16 After examining some New Testament passages, Gentry concludes: "The case is clear: *oinos* is an alcoholic beverage. Yet nowhere is wine *per se* forbidden."17

In the light of such a categorical claim, it is important to ascertain if indeed it is true that in classical Greek *oino*s meant only fermented grape juice. If this claim can be shown to be untrue—by submitting literary examples where *oinos* refers also to unfermented grape juice—then it is certainly possible that the same dual meaning of *oinos* is present also in the New Testament and in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint.

Unfermented Grape Juice. There are ample Greek literary texts which negate the narrow definition of *oino*s as denoting only fermented wine. A clear example is provided by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). In his book *Metereologica*, he clearly refers to "grape juice" or "must" (*gleukos*), as one of the kinds of wine : "For some kinds of wine [*oino*s], for example must [*gleukos*], solidify when boiled."17 In another passage of the same book, Aristotle refers to a sweet grape beverage (*glukus*) which "though called *win*e [*oino*s], it has not the effect of wine, for it does taste like wine and does not intoxicate like ordinary wine."18 In this text Aristotle explicitly informs us that unfermented grape juice was called *"oinos*—wine," though it did not have the taste or the intoxicating effect of ordinary wine.

Athenaeus, the Grammarian (about A.D. 200), explains in his *Banquet* that "the Mityleneans have a sweet wine [*glukon oinon*], what they called *prodromos*, and others call it *protropos*."19 Later on in the same book, he recommends this sweet, unfermented wine (*protropos*) for the dyspeptic: "Let him take sweet wine, either mixed with water or warmed, especially that kind called *protropo*s, the sweet Lesbian *glukus*, as being good for the stomach; for

sweet Lesbian *glukus*, as being good for the stomach, for sweet wine [*oino*s] does not make the head heavy."20 Here the unfermented sweet grape juice is called "lesbian—*effoeminatum*" because the potency or fermentable power of the wine had been removed.

The methods by which this was done will be discussed in Chapter 4, when we discuss the preservation of grape juice in the ancient world. At this juncture it is significant to note that unfermented wine was recommended for stomach problems. To this fact we shall refer again in Chapter 7, when considering the meaning of Paul's recommendation to Timothy to "use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments" (1 Tim 5:23).

In another passage Athenaeus explains: "At the time of festivals, he [Drimacus the General] went about, and took wine from the field [*ek ton agron oinon*] and such animals for victims as were in good condition."21 As Lees and Burns observes, "No one, we suppose, can carry prejudice so far as to impose upon himself the belief that fermented and bottled wine was thus "taken from the fields.'"22

***Oinos* as Pressed Grape Juice.** In several texts the freshly squeezed juice of the grape is denominated *oinos* "wine." For example, Papias, a Christian bishop of Hierapolis who lived at the close of the apostolic age, describes the current extravagant view of the millennium as a time when "vines will grow each with . . . ten thousand clusters on each twig, and ten thousand grapes in each cluster, and each grape, when crushed, will yield twenty-five jars of wine [*oinos*]."23

Proclus, the Platonic philosopher, who lived in the fifth century, in his annotation to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, has a note on line 611 where he explains how the grapes were first exposed to the sun for ten days, then to the shade for ten days and finally "they treaded them and squeezed out the wine [*oino*n]."24 Here also the freshly squeezed juice of the grape is explicitly called "*oinos*—wine."

Several Greek papyri, discussed by Robert Teachout in

his dissertation, indicate that *oinos* could refer to unfermented grape juice.25 A rather clear example is a papyrus from A.D. 137 which contains this statement: "They paid to the one who had earned his wages pure, fresh wine [*oinon*] from the vat."26

Nicander of Colophon speculates that *oinos* derives from the name of a man, *Oineus*, who first squeezed grapes into a cup: "And *Oineus* first squeezed it out into hollow cups and called it *oinos*."27 This view is supported by Melanippides of Melos who says: "Wine, my master, named after *Oineus*."28 These two statements suggest that some traced the origin of *oinos* to the very act of squeezing the juice out of grapes, first done by a man whose name, *Oineus*, presumably became the name of the grape juice itself.

The Septuagint Renderings. The Septuagint, an intertestamental Greek translation of the Old Testament, offers significant examples of the dual meanings of *oinos*. Ernest Gordon points out that "In the Septuagint, the Hebrew word for grape-juice, *tirosh*, is translated at least 33 times by the Greek word *oinos*, wine, and the adjective ‘new’ is not present. *Oinos* without qualification, then, can easily mean unfermented wine in the New Testament."29 It is interesting that the translators of the Septuagint used *oinos* to translate the Hebrew word for grape juice (*tirosh*), instead of a less ambiguous word like *gleukos*, which means "must."

It is also noteworthy that although the Septuagint usually translates the Hebrew *yayin* as *oinos*, in Job 32:19 *yayin* is rendered as *gleukos*, which is the common Greek word for newly pressed grape juice: "Behold, my heart is like wine [*gleukos*—grape juice] that has no vent; like new wineskins, it is ready to burst." In this instance the translators of the Septuagint show that for them the Hebrew *yayin* could refer to must in the process of fermentation.

The above sampling of texts, from both secular and religious authors, makes it abundantly clear that the Greek word *oinos*, like the Latin *vinum* and the English *wine*, was

used as a generic term to refer either to fermented or unfermented grape juice. It remains for us now to verify if the same dual meanings are also present in the secular usage of the Hebrew *yayin*.

4. The Secular Usage of the Hebrew *Yayin*

***Yayin* as Freshly Pressed Grape Juice.** Before examining the Biblical meaning of the Hebrew *yayin* and of the Greek *oinos*, we shall consider the usage of *yayin* in Jewish literature, since the latter provides extra-Biblical documentation on how this word was used over the centuries in Jewish culture. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* provides a concise description of the various usages of *yayin*: "Fresh wine before fermenting was called ‘*yayin mi-gat*” (wine of the vat; Sanh 70a). The ordinary wine was of current vintage. The vintage of the previous year was called ‘*yayin yashan*” (old wine). The third year’s vintage was ‘*yayin meyushshan*” (very old wine)."30

An almost identical description of the use of *yayin* is found in the more recent *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971): "The newly pressed wine prior to fermentation was known as *yayin mi-gat* (‘wine from the vat;’ Sanh 70a), *yayin yashan* (‘old wine’) was wine from the previous year, and that from earlier vintages, *yashan noshan* (‘old, very old’)."31 The full statement from Sanhedrin 70a, a Talmudic treatise to which both encyclopedias refer, reads as follows: "Newly pressed wine, prior to fermentation, was known as *yayin mi-gat* (wine from the press)."

Both of these standard Jewish Encyclopedias explicitly attest that the term *yayin* was used to refer to a variety of wines, including "the newly pressed wine, prior to fermentation." The newly pressed grape juice was apparently known also as "new wine," since Rabbi Hanina B. Kahana answers the question: "How long is it called new wine?" by saying, "As long as it is in the first stage of fermentation . . . and how long is this first stage? Three days."32

Unfermented Wine for Religious Ceremonies. Louis Ginzberg, who for many years was an eminent Professor of Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America

of Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, wrote a scholarly article in 1923 entitled: "A Response to the Question whether Unfermented Wine May be Used in Jewish Ceremonies." In this article Ginzberg examines several passages from the Talmud, relating to the use of unfermented wine in Jewish ceremonies. His conclusions are significant and will be presented in chapter 5.

In this context we shall mention only a couple of statements from the Talmud which Ginzberg examines at considerable length. The first is from the treatise *Baba Bathra* 97a, where Rabbi Hiyya discusses whether freshly pressed wine could be used for the *kiddush*, the ceremony to welcome a religious festival such as the Sabbath. Rabbi Hiyya says: "Since the wine [*yayin*] from the press is acceptable for libations *bedi'abad*, it is acceptable for *Kiddush lekatehillah*."33 This statement is significant for two reasons. First, because is shows that freshly pressed grape juice was known as "wine" (*yayin*). Second, because it indicates that unfermented wine was acceptable for religious ceremonies.

The second passage is largely a restatement with changes of the one just quoted and is found in the *Halakot Gedalot*, the earliest Jewish compendium of the Talmud. The statement reads: "One may press out a cluster of grapes and pronounce the *Kiddush* over the juice, *since the juice of the grape is considered wine [yayin] in connection with the laws of the Nazirite.*"34

This statement is perplexing because the Nazirite law in Numbers 6:1-4 makes no reference that unfermented grape juice was considered wine. Presumably, some Rabbis reached this conclusion on the basis of their common acceptance of grape juice as wine. Louis Ginzberg expresses this view saying: "Since there is no express mention of grape-juice among the drinks prohibited to the Nazirite, its prohibition by the Rabbis can only be justified on the ground that it is considered wine."35

If this assumption is correct, it would provide an additional indirect indication that unfermented grape juice was commonly considered wine (*yayin*) in the Jewish society.

Such an indirect indication, however, is hardly necessary to establish this conclusion, since the two passages cited earlier provide direct evidence that the juice of the grape was indeed designated wine (*yayin*).

Conclusion. The investigation into the secular usage of the related words—*wine, vinum, oinos* and *yayin*—has clearly shown that these words have been historically used in their respective languages to designate the pressed juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented. This means that those who boldly claim that "the two wines view" is devoid of Biblical and historical support, base their claim on their ignorance of the parallel secular usage of the related words for wine in English, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

PART II: THE BIBLICAL USAGE OF *YAYIN* AND *OINOS*

The foregoing investigation has shown that in secular Greek and Hebrew, the respective words for wine, *oinos* and *yayin*, have been used to refer either to fermented or unfermented wine. At this juncture it is important to ascertain if the same dual meanings are found in the Biblical usage of these two related words. This information is essential because it will explain why Scripture sometimes clearly approves of wine and sometimes strongly disapproves of it, while using the same word to designate both.

The apparent ambiguity of Scripture toward wine is resolved if we can establish that the two related words for wine—*oinos* and *yayin*—are used in Scripture in the same way as in secular Greek and Hebrew, namely to refer to the juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented. If these dual meaning is present in Scripture, then it will be easier to show that God approves of the unfermented grape juice and that He disapproves of the fermented intoxicating wine, even while using the same word to designate both. The procedure we shall follow is to examine first the usage of *yayin* in the Old Testament and then of *oinos* in the New Testament.

1. *Yayin* as Fermented Wine

1. *Yayin* as Fermented Wine

Frequent Use. The noun *yayin* is the most frequently used word for wine in the Old Testament, fully 141 times. As already noticed, there is an apparent inconsistency in the use of this word, since sometimes it receives God's approval and sometimes His disapproval. The reason for this will become apparent by looking at some examples where *yayin* obviously means fermented, intoxicating wine and at others where it means unfermented grape juice.

According to Robert Teachout's tabulation of the 141 references to *yayin* in the Old Testament, 71 times the word refers to unfermented grape juice and 70 times to fermented wine.36 This tabulation may not necessarily be accurate, since in certain instances the context is unclear. The actual ratio in the two usages of *yayin* is of relative significance, because for the purpose of our study it is important simply to establish that *yayin* is sometimes used in the Old Testament to refer to the unfermented juice of the grape.

Examples of Intoxication. No one doubts that *yayin* frequently refers in the Old Testament to intoxicating wine. This fact is clearly established both by the many examples of the evil consequences of drinking *yayin* and by the divine condemnation of its use.

The very first example of the use of *yayin* in Scripture describes the intoxicating effects of fermented wine: "Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine [*yayin*] and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent" (Gen 9:20, 21).

Another sordid example in which intoxicating wine played a leading role is that of Lot's daughters. Fearing to be left without progeny after the destruction of Sodom and the surrounding cities, the older daughter said to the younger: "Come, let us make our father drink wine [*yayin*], and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring through our father.' So they made their father drink wine [*yayin*] that night; and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she arose" (Gen 19:32-33). The story continues relating how the following

night the younger daughter repeated the same strategy.

The story of Nabal provides another example of the evil effects of intoxicating wine. Nabal was a wealthy man who had benefited from David's protection. Yet he refused to give any food in return to David's men. When David organized his men to kill the ungrateful Nabal, his wife, Abigail, acted hastily on a tip received and brought provisions to David, apologizing for her husband's foolish behavior. After David accepted her apologies and provisions, she returned home, only to find her husband drunk: "And Abigail came to Nabal; and, lo, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; so she told him nothing at all until the morning light. And in the morning, when the wine [*yayin*] had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him and he became as a stone" (1 Sam 25:36-37).

Among the many other stories of intoxicating wine, we could refer to Ammon, who was murdered by the servants of his brother Absalom while he was "merry with wine [*yayin*]" (2 Sam 13:28). Also King Ahasuerus who, when his heart "was merry with wine [*yayin*]" (Esther 1:10), tried to subject Vashiti, his queen, to the gaze of the inebriated nobility of the royal court.

The examples cited suffice to show that *yayin* in the Old Testament often refers to fermented, intoxicating wine. Further indications are provided by the explicit divine disapproval of the use of wine.

Disapproval of *Yayin.* The classic condemnation of the use of intoxicating wine and a description of its consequences is found in Proverbs 23:29-35. After warning against some woes caused by wine, such as sorrow, strife, complaining, wounds without cause and redness of eyes, Solomon admonishes to refrain even from looking upon wine: "Do not look at wine [*yayin*] when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder" (Prov 23:31-32).

A similar warning against intoxicating wine is found in

Proverbs 20:1: "Wine [*yayin*] is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." Such warnings, however, were largely ignored. By the time of Isaiah, drinking fermented wine had become such a universal problem that even "the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink; they are confused with wine [*yayin*], they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in giving judgment" (Is 28:7).

Other passages which clearly indicate that *yayin* refers to fermented, intoxicating wine, will be mentioned in the following chapter, where we shall examine more closely some of the reasons that Scripture admonishes not to use fermented wine.

2. *Yayin* as Unfermented Grape Juice

No Self-explanatory Passage. The use of *yayin* in the Old Testament to denote unfermented grape juice is not always as evident as its use to describe alcoholic wine, because the former does not come under condemnation like the latter. There is no single passage which clearly defines *yayin* as unfermented grape juice. If such a passage existed, there would be no controversy over this subject and no need to write this book.

The Bible, however, is not a lexicon which defines its words. The meaning of its words must often be derived from their context and from their comparative usage in other passages and/or related (cognate) languages. In the case of the word *yayin*, we believe that there are passages where the context clearly indicates that the word designates unfermented grape juice.

Isaiah 16:10. One of the clearest passages is Isaiah 16:10. The context of the passage is God’s judgment upon Moab for its pride. The judgment is manifested, as often is the case throughout the Old Testament, through the removal of the divine blessing from the vineyard and the grape juice: "And joy and gladness are taken away from the fruitful field; and in the vineyard no songs are sung, no shouts are raised; no treader treads out wine [*yayin*] in the presses; the vintage shout is hushed" (Is 16:10).

The important point which this passage clarifies is that what the treaders tread out in the pressing vat is called *yayin*. This is obviously unfermented grape juice, since fermentation is a time-controlled process. Some people wrongly assume that if one just lets grape juice alone, it will automatically ferment into a "good" grade of wine. Such an assumption is wrong. Pressed grape juice (must) allowed to ferment without a controlled environment becomes spoiled grape juice (vinegar) which no one wishes to drink.

Kenneth L. Gentry objects to this interpretation by arguing that "the poetic imagery so common in Hebrew poetry will allow *yayin* here to be alcoholic."37 His argument is that in poetry sometimes the end results are attributed to the substance which causes the result. Gentry's objection has two major weaknesses. First, it fails to recognize that the poetic imagery of Isaiah 16:10 deals with the joy of the harvest and the treading of the grapes. The *yayin* flowing out of the press is seen not in terms of what it could become, fermented wine, but in terms of what it is at harvest time, "wine in the presses."

Second, Gentry ignores the fact that the pressed grape juice, prior to fermentation, was called by the Jews, as shown earlier, *"yayin mi-gat*—wine from the press." Being unwilling to accept the fact that pressed grape juice could be called *yayin*, Gentry and a host of moderationists are forced to interpret as alcoholic wine the very *yayin* flowing from the press. Normal interpretation of Isaiah 16:10 does not require interpreting *yayin* as a poetic reference to the finished product, fermented wine, since the plain reference to fresh grape juice makes good, understandable sense in the context. A parallel passage is found in Jeremiah 48:33.

Jeremiah 40:10, 12. Another clear example of the use of *yayin* to designate the unfermented juice of the grape is found in Jeremiah 40:10, 12. In verse 10, Gedaliah, the Babylonian governor, tells the Jews who had not been taken captive: "Gather wine [*yayin*] and summer fruits and oil, and store them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken." This order encouraged those Jews who had fled to neighboring countries to return to the land of Judah "and they gathered wine [*yayin*] and summer

fruits in great abundance" (Jer 40:12). In both of these verses we find the term *yayin* used in a matter-of-fact construction to refer to the fruit of the vine. Alcoholic wine is not gathered from the fields. Such usages negate the assumption that *yayin* can refer only to fermented wine.

Nehemiah 13:15. In Nehemiah 13:15 we find another example where *yayin* is used to designate freshly pressed grape juice. "In those days I saw in Judah men treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on asses; and also wine [*yayin*], grapes, figs and all kind of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; and I warned them on the day when they sold food." Here *yayin* is most probably the pressed grape juice, since it is mentioned together with the treading of wine presses on the Sabbath. The fresh juice was sold on the Sabbath along with fresh grapes and other fruits.

Lamentations 2:12. In Lamentations there is a vivid description of the physical anguish suffered by Judah during the great famine caused by Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem. In famished distress the little children cried out to their mothers: "'Where is bread and wine [*yayin*]?' as they faint like wounded men in the streets of the city, as their life is poured out on their mothers' bosom" (Lam 2:12).

In this passage the nursing infants are crying out to their mothers for their normal fare of food and drink, namely, bread and *yayin*. It is hardly imaginable that in time of siege and famine, little children would be asking their mothers for intoxicating wine as their normal drink. "What they wanted as they were dying on their mothers' breast," notes Robert Teachout, "was grape juice (*yayin*) which has a tremendous nourishment and which had been part of their normal diet."38

Genesis 49:11. In Genesis 49:11 the blessings of God upon Judah are prophesised through the imagery of an abundant harvest of *yayin:* "He washes his garments in wine [*yayin*] and his vesture in the blood of grapes." The idea expressed by this imagery is that the harvest is so copious that the garments of the grape treaders appear

copious that the garments of the grape treaders appear washed in the abundance of juice.

In this passage we also have a striking example of Hebrew parallelism where two clauses express the same thought with different words. In this instance, the "garments" of the first clause correspond to the "vesture" of the second clause, and the "wine" (*yayin*) to the "blood of the grapes." "Blood" is a poetical name for "grape juice," and its usage in parallelism with "wine" suggests that in Bible times grape juice was called *yayin*, prior to its fermentation.

Song of Solomon. Other examples of the use of *yayin* referring to unfermented grape juice are found in the love poem written by Solomon, King of Israel. In several verses the enjoyment of pure love is compared with *yayin*: "O that you would kiss me with the kisses of your mouth! For your love is better than wine [*yayin*], . . . We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine [*yayin*]; . . . How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride! how much better is your love than wine [*yayin*]" (Song of Solomon 1:2, 4; 4:10).

In these verses *yayin* can hardly refer to fermented, intoxicating wine, since the author of this book condemns fermented wine as a "mocker" and a stinging "adder" (Prov 20:1, 23:32). It is evident that Solomon is comparing the sweetness of pure, undefiled love with sweet grape juice. Such a comparison is most appropriate, because, as Teachout observes, "just as grape juice was given explicitly by God for the purpose of rejoicing the heart of man (Psalm 104:15), so too is the love between a man and a woman."39

The foregoing examples clearly indicate that, contrary to prevailing opinion, *yayin* was used in the Old Testament, as in rabbinical literature, to designate either fermented *or* unfermented grape juice.

3. *Oinos* as Fermented Wine

The meaning of *oinos*, the Greek term for wine in the New Testament, is equivalent to the Hebrew meaning of *yayin* in the Old Testament. Earlier we established that *oinos*

was used in secular Greek literature as a generic term to refer either to fermented or unfermented grape juice. The same dual meanings of *oinos* can be found in its Biblical usage. The word, however, occurs only 32 times in the New Testament, while the corresponding Hebrew *yayin* occurs 141 times.

Intoxicating *Oinos*. One of the clearest examples of the use of *oinos* as intoxicating wine, is found in Ephesians 5:18: "And do not get drunk with wine [*oinos*], for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit." It is evident that here *oinos* refers to fermented, intoxicating wine. First, because it can make a person "drunk," and second, because its usage is condemned as "debauchery," that is, utter depravity and dissoluteness.

The intoxicating power of *oinos* is implied in its symbolic use to describe divine judgment upon the wicked: "He also shall drink the wine [*oinos*] of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger" (Rev 14:10). Here the "wine of God's wrath" is said to be "unmixed" (*akraton*), that is, not mixed with water which would reduce its potency. A similar figurative use is found in Revelation 16:19 (NIV) where it says: "God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine [*oinos*] of the fury of his wrath." Here the fury of God's wrath is described by the imagery of a cup of wine, intoxicating and maddening those who are compelled to drink it.

The intoxicating wine of God's wrath represents the retribution in kind upon "the great harlot . . . with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the dwellers on earth have become drunk" (Rev 17:1, 2). Here spiritual whoredom is represented as intoxicating wine possessing an incredible power to confuse the understanding and to corrupt the heart.

These few examples of the literal and figurative use of *oinos* make it abundantly clear that the term is used in the New Testament to refer to intoxicating, fermented wine.

4. *Oinos* as Unfermented Grape Juice

Indications of the Biblical usage of *oinos* as unfermented grape juice come to us in two different ways: (1) through the Greek translation of the Old Testament (known as the Septuagint) used by the apostles, and (2) through the context of such New Testament texts as Matthew 9:17 and Revelation 6:6.

***Oinos* in the Septuagint.** We noted earlier that the Septuagint, an intertestamental Greek translation of the Old Testament used by the apostles, translates at least 33 times the Hebrew word for grape juice, *tirosh*, by the Greek word *oinos* (Ps 4:7-8, Is 65:8; Joel 1:10-12; 2:23-24). For example, in Proverbs 3:10 the freshly pressed juice of the grape (*tirosh* in Hebrew) is translated *oinos* in the Septuagint. The King James Version reads: "Thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov 3:10). "New wine" translates the Hebrew *tirosh*, but the Septuagint simply uses the word *oinos* without the adjective "*new*." This in itself shows, as Ernest Gordon observes, that "*oinos* without qualification, then, can easily mean unfermented wine in the New Testament." 40 The fact that the translators of the Septuagint employed the word *oinos* to translate *tirosh,* which is the common Hebrew word for fresh grape juice, is proof that *oinos* was used to refer to both fermented and unfermented grape juice.

This conclusion is further supported by the use of the Greek word *oinos* in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *yayin* when the latter clearly means the freshly pressed juice of the grapes. For example, the Septuagint uses *oinos* to translate *yayin* in Isaiah 16:10: "No treader treads out wine [*oinos* in the Septuagint] in the presses." In view of the fact that the language of the Septuagint greatly influenced New Testament writers, it seems plausible to assume that *oinos* is used also in the New Testament with the same dual meanings of fermented or unfermented grape juice.

New Wine in Fresh Wineskins. A possible use of *oinos* in the New Testament as a reference to unfermented wine, is found in Matthew 9:17 where Jesus says: "Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; if it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new

the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved." From this verse we learn that it was customary in Christ's time to put new wine into new wineskins in order to preserve both the wine and its wineskins.

The usual explanation for this custom is that new wineskins were used because they could better resist the expansive force of the carbonic acid generated by fermentation. For example, Jimmy L. Albright writes: "Freshly made wine was put into new wineskins; old skins would burst under the pressure (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-38)."41 This view can hardly be correct, because new wineskins, no matter how strong, could resist the pressure caused by fermentation. I have learned this fact from personal experience, as I have seen in my parents' cellar glass bottles shattered to pieces by grape juice which had inadvertently fermented.

The *Encyclopedia Biblica* rightly observes that "it is impossible that the *must* could ever have been put into skins to undergo the whole process of fermentation, as is usually stated, the action of the gas given off in the earlier stages of the process being much too violent for any skins to withstand."42

The process of wine making in the ancient Near East is only relatively known. James B. Pritchard, excavator of ancient Gibeon, where 63 storage vats were found, candidly admits that "only a little is known from literary and pictorial sources of preclassical times about the process of making wine in the ancient Near East."43 According to his reconstruction, at Gibeon the juice of pressed grapes was transferred into four different tanks during the course of several days. In the last three tanks the violent fermentation processes occurred. Then the decanted wine was poured into large jars sealed with olive oil at 65 degrees F (18 degrees C).

Unfermented Grape Juice. In the light of this information, Christ's saying about "new wine" being placed in "fresh wineskins" can best be understood as referring to wine fresh from the press which was strained and possibly boiled, and then placed immediately into new wineskins made air-tight, possibly by a film of oil on the opening of

made air-tight, possibly by a film of oil on the opening of the wineskin. The various methods used by the ancients to preserve grape juice unfermented will be discussed in Chapter 4. At this juncture it suffices to note that Christ's words suggest that "new wine" was placed into fresh wineskins to insure the absence of any fermentation-causing substance.

"If old bags were used," Lees and Burns explain, "some of the decayed albuminous matter adhering to their sides must, by the action of air, have become changed into a leaven or ferment (Hebrew, *seor*); or by long wear and heat, cracks or apertures admitting the air might exist undetected; and the wine, thus set a-fermenting, would in due course burst the skin, and be spilled and 'lost'"44 On the other hand, if unfermented new wine was poured into new wineskins, no cause of fermentation would be present. Thus, the wine would be preserved from fermentation and the wineskins from rupture. If this interpretation is correct, then Christ's reference to "new wine" (*oinos neos*) would constitute another example of the use of *oinos* in the New Testament to describe unfermented grape juice.

Oil and Wine Spared. An example of the generic use of the word *oinos* is found in Revelation 6:6, where a voice is heard from the center of the throne room, saying: "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; but do not harm oil and wine [*oinos*]!" The warning against hurting the oil and the wine sets the limits to the destruction which the black horse and its rider are about to carry out. "Since the roots of the olive and vine go deeper," explains Robert H. Mounce, "they would not be affected by a limited drought which would all but destroy the grain."45

In the context of this warning against the destruction of the harvest, the reference to "oil and wine" is significant, because it shows that these two terms could be used to refer to the solid fruits, the olive and the grape yielding oil and wine (*oin*os) . This usage of the term *oinos* to refer to the actual fruit—the grapes—is not surprising, because there are numerous examples in secular Greek in which wine is spoken of as produced within the grape and cluster.46 Anacreon, for example, speaks of the *oinos*

cluster.46 Anacreon, for example, speaks of the *oinos* "imprisoned in the fruit upon the branches," and he sings of the treaders "letting loose the wine."47

The above examples of the usage of *oinos* in the New Testament and in the Septuagint show that the term was used in Biblical Greek in a generic way, to refer to either fermented or unfermented grape juice. This usage is consistent with what we have found to be the use of *yayin* in the Old Testament. Thus the meaning of the two related Biblical terms for wine (*yayin* and *oinos*) must be determined by the context in which they are used. This will become more apparent in the next chapter where we shall examine the Biblical teaching on wine.

Conclusion

The survey conducted in this chapter on the usage of four related words—*wine* in English, *vinum* in Latin, *oinos* in Greek and *yayin* in Hebrews—has shown an amazing consistency in the historical usage of these related words. *In all four languages, these linguistically related words have been used historically to refer to the juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented.* This significant finding discredits the charge that the theory of the two wines is devoid of Biblical and historical support. The sampling of Biblical and historical sources examined in this chapter shows instead that it is the theory of one wine which is devoid of Biblical and historical support.

Long before this century, scholars recognized that the Hebrew, Greek and Latin words for wine could refer equally to fermented or unfermented grape juice. In recent times, however, this historical understanding has been obscured by the restrictive use of "wine" which has come to mean only fermented, intoxicating grape juice. This has misled many Christians into believing that *yayin* and *oinos* also refer *only* to fermented wine which Scripture allegedly approves.

In this chapter we have endeavored to clarify this prevalent misunderstanding, by showing how Scripture uses the same words (*yayin* and *oinos*) to designate either fermented or unfermented grape juice. This conclusion will

become clearer in the next chapter, where we shall examine some of the reasons that the Bible disapproves of fermented wine but approves of unfermented grape juice.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II

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2. E. W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible* (London, 1923), appendix 27.

3. Robert P. Teachout, *Wine. The Biblical Imperative: Total Abstinence* (Published by the author, 1986), p. 22.

4. Cited by Frederic Richard Lees and Dawson Burns, *The Temperance Bible-Commentary* (London, 1894), p. xxxvii. Several similar definitions are given on pp. xxxvi to xxxviii.

5. Cited by Charles Wesley Ewing, *The Bible and Its Wines* (Denver, 1985), p. 1.

6. Ibid., p. 2.

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8. William Whiston, trans., *Josephus Complete Works* (Grand Rapids, 1974), p. 48. The text is from Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 2, 5, 2, emphasis supplied.

9. *Thesaurus Lingae Latinae* (London, 1740), vol. 4, p. 557.

10. Marcus Cato, *On Agriculture* 147, 1.

11. Cited by Lees and Burns (n. 4), p. xxxvi.

12. Pliny, *Natural History* 14, 11, 80-85, trans. H. Rackham, *Pliny Natural Hstory, The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 241-243.

13. Cited by Lees and Burns (n. 4), p. xxxvi.

14. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York, 1947), part 3, question 74, article 5, p. 2443.

15. Kenneth L. Gentry (n.1), pp. 45-46.

16. Ibid., p. 46.

17. Aristotle, *Metereologica* 384. a. 4-5.

18. Aristotle, *Metereologica* 388. b. 9-13. See also *Metereologica* 388. a. 34 which says: "There is more than one kind of liquid called wine [*oinos*] and different kinds behave differently. For new wine contains more earth than old, and so thickens most under the influence of heat, but solidifies less under the influence of cold." The reference to the thickening of new wine under the influence of heat implies that new wine was preserved unfermented by boiling it down. This practice, as we shall see in Chapter 4, was common among the Romans.

19. Athenaeus, *Banquet* 1, 54.

20. Ibid., 2, 24.

21. Ibid., 6, 89.

22. Lees and Burns (n. 4), p. 198.

23. Cited by Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5, 33, 3-4, trans. Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers* (New York, 1950), p. 263.

24. Cited by Lees and Burns (n. 4), p. 433.

25. Robert P. Teachout, "The Use of ‘Wine’ in the Old

Testament" (Ph.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979), p. 369.

26. P. Oxy. IV. 72919; ibid., p. 10.

27. Nicander, *Georgica* frag. 86, cited by Robert P. Teachout (n. 25), p. 370.

28. Cited by Athanaeus, *Banquet* 2. 35.

29. Ernest Gordon, *Christ, the Apostles and Wine. An Exegetical Study* (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 14.

30. *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* 1906 ed., s. v. "Wine," vol. 12, p. 533.

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34. Ibid., p. 409.

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36. Robert P. Teachout (n. 25), pp. 349-358.

37. Kenneth L. Gentry (n. 1), p. 30.

38. Robert P. Teachout (n. 3), p. 37.

39. Ibid., p. 38.

40. Ernest Gordon (n. 29), p. 14.

41. Jimmy L. Albright, "Wine in the Biblical World: Its Economic, Social and Religious Implications for New Testament Interpretation" (Doctor of Philosophy

dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980), p. 137.

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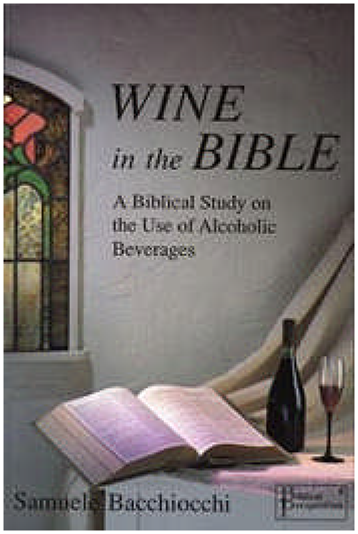
43. James B. Pritchard, *Gibeon: Where the Sun Stood Still* (Princeton, 1962), p. 97.

44. Lees and Burns (n. 4), p. 266.

45. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, 1977), p. 155.

46. For some examples see Lees and Burns (n. 4), p. 433.

47. Anacreon, *Ode* 49 and *Ode* 51.



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WINE IN THE BIBLE: A BIBLICAL STUDY ON THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Chapter 4

THE PRESERVATION OF GRAPE JUICE

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A major objection to the view that Scripture approves the use of unfermented grape juice is the alleged impossibility in Bible times of preserving grape juice unfermented. Burton Scott states this objection most clearly in his article on "*Wine*" in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*: "Unfermented grape juice is a very difficult thing to keep without the aid of modern antiseptic precautions, and its preservation in the warm and not overly-cleanly conditions of ancient Palestine was impossible."1

Objective of This Chapter. This chapter aims at ascertaining whether the preservation of grape juice in its unfermented state was possible or impossible in Bible times. Our investigation will show that the ancients were far more knowledgeable in the art of preserving fruits and wines than generally presumed.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first considers the methods used by the ancients to preserve fruits and wines in general and the second, the methods used to prevent the fermentation of grape juice in particular.

PART I: THE ANCIENT ART OF PRESERVATION

1. The Preservation of Fruits

Amazing Ability. There is considerable information regarding the amazing ability of the ancients to preserve fruits and juices. An example is Josephus' account of the Roman capture of the fortress of Masada. He tells us that the fruits and grains the Romans found in the fortress were still fresh, although they had been stored for many years:

"Here was laid up corn in large quantities, and such as would subsist men for a long time; here was also wine and oil in abundance, with all kinds of pulse and dates heaped up together; all which Eleazar found there, when he and his *Sicarii* got possession of the fortress by treachery. These fruits were also fresh and full ripe, and not inferior to such fruits newly laid in, although they were little short of a hundred years from the laying in (of) these provisions (by Herod), till the place was taken by the Romans; nay, indeed, when the Romans got possession of those fruits that were left, they found them not corrupted all that while: nor should we be mistaken, if we supposed that the air was here the cause of their enduring so long."2

Josephus' claim that the Jews in Masada were able to preserve grain and fruits fresh for almost one hundred years is obviously an exaggeration. The statement, however, does suggest that the art of preserving produce was well known to the Jews. Unfortunately Jewish sources do not tell us what such technology was.

Classical Writers. Some classical writers, however, do offer us considerable insight into the methods used by ancient people to preserve grains, fruits, vegetables and wines. One of them is Columella, a renowned agriculturalist who lived in the first century A.D. In his treatise *On Agriculture and Trees*, Columella discusses at great length the various methods used by different people to preserve such produce as lettuce, onions, apples, pears, berries, plums, figs, olives, unfermented grape juice and fermented wine. We shall summarize briefly what he says first about the preservation of fresh produce in general and then about the preservation of fermented and unfermented wines in particular. This information should dispel the mistaken notion of the impossibility of preserving grape juice unfermented in Bible times.

Columella describes first of all a method used to preserve berries and plums: "Cornel-berries, which we use instead of olives, also wild plums and onyx-colored plums should be picked while they are still hard and not very ripe; they must not, however, be too unripe. They should then be dried for a day in the shade; then vinegar and must boiled-down to half or one third of its original volume should be

mixed and poured in [the vessel containing the berries or plums], but it will be necessary to add some salt, so that no worms or other form of animal life can be engendered in them."[3]

Methods of Preserving Fruits. A similar method was used for the preservation of other kinds of fruits. Columella explains: "Before they [pears] are ripe but when they are no longer quite raw, examine them carefully to see that they are sound and free from blemish or worms, and then arrange them in an earthernware vessel that has been treated with pitch and fill it with raisin-wine or must boiled-down to one-third of its original volume, so that all the fruit is submerged; then put a cover on the top and plaster it up."[4]

Columella goes on to explain that instead of boiled-down must, some people used honey-water or bee’s wax-water for preserving fruits.[5] The submersion of fruit in liquid honey was viewed as one of the safest methods of preservation, because as Columella remarks, "such is the nature of honey that it checks any corruption and does not allow it to spread."[6] Today we use a similar method when we can fruit in a heavy sugar syrup.

Another method used was to place the fruit in a barrel between layers of sawdust and when the barrel was full, its lid was carefully sealed with thick clay.[7] Still another method consisted of "dabbing the fruit, when it is fresh, thickly with well-kneaded potter’s clay, and when the clay has dried, hanging it up in a cool place; then, when it is required for use, the fruit should be plunged in water and the clay dissolved. This process keeps the fruit as fresh as if it had only just been picked."[8]

The Preservation of Grapes. Several methods were used for preserving grapes fresh. One of them consisted in cutting the grapes with lengthy branches and sealing the cut with pitch. The grapes were then placed in vessels filled with dry chaff. "In order that the grapes may remain green for as much as a year," Columella explains, "you will keep them in the following manner. When you have cut from the vine grapes . . . , immediately treat their pedicles with hard pitch; then fill a new earthenware pan with the

driest possible chaff, which has been sifted that it may be free from dust, and put the grapes upon it. Then cover it with another pan and daub it around with clay mixed with chaff, and then, after arranging the pans in a very dry loft, cover them with dry chaff."[9]

Other people, according to Columella, preserved grapes by dipping their pedicles into boiling pitch immediately after they were cut, and then placing them in dishes arranged in different layers within a barrel containing boiled-down must.[10] Instead of must, some people used barley-bran to "fill the barrel with alternate strata of bran and grapes. Next they put on the lids and seal them up and store the grapes in a very dry and cool loft."[11]

Columella goes on relating similar methods used by other people. "Some people," he says, "after the same method, preserve green grapes in dry sawdust of poplar-wood or fir; others cover up the grapes, which they have picked from the vines when they were not too ripe, in dry flower of gypsum. Others, when they have picked a bunch, cut off with shears any defective grapes in it, and then hang it up in the granary where there is wheat stored below them. But this method causes the grapes to become shrivelled and almost as sweet as raisins."[12]

After describing several other methods used by different people to preserve grapes fresh, Columella concludes, saying: "different methods suit different districts according to the local conditions and the quality of the grapes."[13]

Pliny, a Roman scholar and naturalist, contemporary of Columella, briefly describes in his *Natural History* other methods used to preserve grapes: "Some grapes will last all through the winter if the clusters are hung by a string from the ceiling, and others will keep merely in their own natural vigor by being stood in earthenware jars with casks put over them, and packed round with fermenting grape-skins."[14]

Squeezed Grapes. The fact that the ancients knew several methods for preserving grapes fresh until the following vintage suggests that unfermented grape juice could be produced at any time of the year simply by

squeezing grapes into a cup. This practice is confirmed both in rabbinical and Christian literature. For example, the *Halakat Gedalat,* the earliest compendium of the Talmud, says: "One may press out a cluster of grapes and pronounce the *kiddush* [blessing pronounced at the consecration of the Sabbath or a festival] over the juice, since the juice of the grape is considered wine in connection with the law of the Nazarite."15

The apocryphal *Acts and Martyrdom of Matthew*, a document which circulated in the second and third centuries of the Christian era, attests to the use of freshly pressed juice of grapes in the celebration of the Lord's Supper: "Bring as an offering the holy bread; and, having pressed three clusters from the vine into a cup, communicate with me, as the Lord Jesus showed us how to offer up when he rose from the dead on the third day."16 This is a clear and positive testimony not only of the custom of making grape juice by pressing grapes, but also of using unfermented grape juice in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

There are indications that the practice of pressing preserved grapes directly into the Lord's Supper cup continued for centuries. For example, the third Council of Braga (A.D. 675) reports Cyprian's charge against those "who presented no other wine [*vinum*] at the sacrament of the Lord's cup but what they pressed out of the clusters of grapes." 17 It is noteworthy that fresh grape juice is called "wine" (*vinum*). The charge was not against the use of unfermented grape juice as such, but rather against the failure to mix the grape juice with water.

The practice of mingling wine with water apparently originated, as Leon C. Field points out, "not necessarily in the weakening of alcoholic wine, but in the thinning of boiled wines and the thick juices of the crushed clusters."18 Instruction about this had already been given three centuries before by Pope Julius I (A.D. 337) in a decree which read: "But if necessary let the cluster be pressed into the cup and water mingled with it."19 Additional historical testimonies will be given in the following chapter, in conjunction with our study of the communion wine. Such testimonies show that freshly

preserved grapes were used throughout the year to make pressed grape juice.

2. The Preservation of Fermented Wine

A Prevailing Misconception. It is widely believed that in the ancient world it was much easier to preserve fermented wine than to preserve unfermented grape juice. Such a belief rests on the mistaken assumption that the preservation of fermented wine was a simple process requiring only that the pressed grape juice ferment naturally. The truth is quite different. Fermented wines are subject to a number of infections which cause them to become acid, malodorous and moldy. The ancients were well aware of these problems. Pliny, for example, frankly acknowledges that "it is a peculiarity of wine among liquids to go moldy or else to turn into vinegar; and whole volumes of instructions how to remedy this have been published."20

Columella similarly notes that both fermented wine and unfermented, boiled-down must were subject to spoil: "Boiled-down must, though carefully made, is, like wine, apt to go sour."21 He goes on saying: "This being so, let us be mindful to preserve our wine with boiled-down must of a year old, the soundness of which has been already tested."22

Here Columella indicates that unfermented, boiled-down grape juice, which generally kept better than fermented wine, was used to preserve the latter. Before discussing some of the techniques used in the ancient world to preserve wine, it is important to note how delicate and difficult it was in those days to preserve wine. A major reason was the lack of a precise technology for controlling the fermentation process.

The Discovery of Pasteurization. It was in the late nineteenth century that Louis Pasteur, the great French chemist, discovered the cause of fermentation and a remedy for it, known as pasteurization. Pasteur's famous research, *Études sur la bière* (1876), was in fact conducted at the request of beer and wine producers who asked him to find a way to prevent the infections which

spoiled their products, causing them enormous financial loss. This research led Pasteur to discover that fermentation was caused by the multiplication of microorganisms rather than by chemical change. To prevent or control fermentation, Pasteur discovered in 1876 a method known today as "pasteurization," which consists in the destruction of certain bacteria by exposing a liquid (wine, milk, beer) for a period of time to a certain temperature.

Today through pressure boilers, filters, separators, complex refrigeration and pasteurization, the wine industry (known as enology) is able to control the fermentation process. Such a control becomes especially necessary when the must contains too much water and too little sugar because the season has been cold or rainy, or because the grape has grown on moist lands. In such case, wine makers today correct the imperfect composition of the must by adding to it saccharin substances and by diminishing its water content through artificial evaporation. These modern technical procedures have freed wine growers from the constant fear that their vintage may become spoiled. Without such a technical knowledge and means, ancient wine makers faced the constant risk of losing their vintage.

Problems in Preserving Wine. Marcus Porcius Cato (234-150 B.C.), who is considered the father of both Latin prose and literature on agriculture, refers to some of the problems related to the preservation of fermented wine. In chapter 148 of his treatise *On Agriculture***,** Cato alludes to such problems when he speaks of the terms "for the sale of wine in jars." One of the conditions was that "only wine which is neither sour nor musty will be sold. Within three days it shall be tasted subject to the decision of an honest man, and if the purchaser fails to have this done, it will be considered tasted; but any delay in the tasting caused by the owner will add as many days to the time allowed the purchaser."[23] The fact that the purchaser was to taste the wine within three days of purchase or take it as it was, shows how quickly wine was subject to turn sour or musty.

Cato prescribes some precautions to prevent wine from becoming sour or musty: "Divide the grapes gathered each day, after cleaning and drying, equally between the

each day, after cleaning and drying, equally between the jars. If necessary, add to the new wine a fortieth part of must boiled-down from untrod grapes, or a pound and a half of salt to the culleus [a liquid measure]. If you use marble dust, add one pound to the culleus; mix this with must in a vessel and then pour into the jar. If you use resin, pulverize it thoroughly, three pounds to the culleus of must, place it in a basket, and suspend it in the jar of must; shake the basket often so that the resin may dissolve. When you use boiled must or marble dust or resin, stir frequently for twenty days and press down daily."24

In this statement Cato provides quite an insight into the variety of products used to preserve fermented wine: boiled-down must, salt, marble dust, and resin. Later we shall see that Columella mentions other preservatives as well. In spite of the use of such preservatives, problems still developed with fermented wine.

In chapters 107 to 110 Cato refers to some of these problems. One of them was the bad odor emitted by wine and absorbed by the brims of the wine jars. Another problem was the wine that became itself acid or bad smelling. To remedy the problem of bad-smelling brims, Cato prescribes the preparation of a cream, made up of boiled must, crushed iris and Campanian melilot. These ingredients were to be mixed and allowed to boil over a slow fire. The resulting cream was smeared over the brims of wine jars.25

Apparently this treatment did not always prevent wine from turning sour (*asperum*). To sweeten the wine turned bitter, Cato offers this prescription: "Make four pounds of flour from vetch, and mix four cyathi of wine with boiled-down must; make into small bricks and let them soak for a night and a day; then dissolve with wine in the jar, and seal sixty days later."26 This procedure was to make the wine "sweet" and "of good odor."

Presumably this did not always happen, because in the following chapter Cato gives another prescription to remove bad odor from wine: "Heat a thick clear piece of roofing-tile thoroughly in the fire. When it is hot coat it with pitch, attach a string, lower it gently to the bottom of the jar, and leave the jar sealed for two days. If the bad odor is

and leave the jar sealed for two days. If the bad odor is removed the first time, that will be best; if not repeat until the bad odor is removed."27

The above examples of ancient remedies to cure problems caused by fermenting wine show how mistaken the assumption is that the preservation of fermented wine was a simple process in the ancient world. The sources indicate that the process was far from simple. The different means used to prevent spoiling the wine reveal the perplexity and uncertainty of vine growers regarding how to remedy the deterioration of fermented wine. To better appreciate the complexity and intensity of the problem, we shall consider briefly some of the methods used to preserve fermented wine.

Preservation of Wine with Boiled-Down Must. Boiled-down unfermented must was used in the ancient world not only as a drink, diluted with water, but also as a preservative for fermented wine. Columella, the renowned Roman agriculturist, discusses at great length how boiled-down must was used to preserve wine. "Let us be mindful," he urges, "to preserve our wine with boiled-down must of a year old, the soundness of which has been already tested."28

Not all wine needed to be preserved with boiled-down must or other preservatives, but especially that produced from new vineyards, or vineyards located in less than ideal locations. "We regard as the best wine," Columella says, "any kind which can keep without any preservative."29 Such wines, however, were apparently rather rare, because Columella discusses extensively how to preserve wines from different kinds of vineyards and seasonal conditions.

The preparation of boiled-down must to be used as a preservative for fermented wine was quite a laborious process. It involved not only the boiling down in a leisurely manner of the must to half or one-third of its original volume, but also the addition of such preservatives as pitch and turpentine resin. Spices were also added such as "the leaf of spikenard, the *costus* [an Indian aromatic plant], the date, the angular rush and the sweet-rush . . . myrrh, cinnamon, balsam and saffron."30

myrrh, cinnamon, balsam and saffron."30

This complex preparation was eventually mixed with the wine to be preserved. The actual ratio of the mixture depended on the quality of the wine. As Columella explains: "It is uncertain how much of this preparation ought to be added to forty-eight *sextarii*, because the calculation of the right amount must be based on the quality of the wine, and care must be taken that the flavor of the preservative is not noticeable, for that drives away the purchaser. I personally, if the vintage is wet, usually mix a *triens* of the preservative in two *amphorae*; if it is dry, a *quadrans*."31

Preservation of Wine with Salt. Another significant method for preserving wine was by adding salt or sea-water to the must during the first few days of fermentation. Apparently this method was widely used, since Columella says: "Some people—and indeed almost all the Greeks—preserve must with salt or sea-water."32

If powdered salt was used it was diluted with water before being poured into the fermenting wine. If sea-water was used, it was "boiled-down to a third of its original volume,"33 and then poured into the must, after the latter had been transferred into fumigated jars. The use of salt was widely recommended to prevent a moldy taste in the wine. "If possible," Columella advises, "every sort of vintage in every district ought to be salted with this same quantity; for this prevents there being any moldy taste in the wine."34

Preservation of Wine with Pitch. Another substance used to preserve wine was pitch, in both its liquid and solid form. Columella devotes three chapters of his treatise *On Agriculture* (22, 23, 24) to the discussion of the various kinds of pitches used to preserve wine. Usually the pitch was dissolved in sea-water which was allowed to evaporate, and then such a solution was poured into the wine to be treated. The actual quantity of the solution used depended on the condition of the wine.

To those wishing to preserve the whole vintage with pitch, Columella offers this advice: "But if you wish to preserve the whole vintage with the same pitch in such a way that it

the whole vintage with the same pitch in such a way that it is impossible to tell from the taste that it has been preserved with pitch, it will be enough to mix six *scripula* of the same pitch with forty-five *sextarii* of wine when at length it has ceased to ferment and the dregs have been cleared away."35

The foregoing discussion of the various methods used by ancient people to preserve fermented wine is by no means exhaustive. Other substances were used as preservatives such as marble dust, lime sulphur fumes or crushed iris. The examples cited suffice to show that the preservation of fermented wine in the ancient world was a far more complex process than is generally assumed. In fact, in some places the risk of preserving fermented wine was so great that, as we shall now see, all the vintage was boiled-down and preserved as sweet, unfermented grape juice.

PART II: THE PRESERVATION OF GRAPE JUICE

Fermentation Process: The ancients were acquainted with the fact of fermentation, even though they did not understand its causes. Just what happens during the conversion of grape juice into wine was not clearly understood until the 1860's, when Louis Pasteur undertook his study of fermentation. The ancients, however, were familiar with some of the methods by which fermentation can be prevented.

Grape juice contains two leading ingredients, glucose or grape sugar and albumen, both of which contribute to the fermentation process. The albumen, which is found in the lining of the skin and in the envelope of the seed of the grape, contains microscopic organisms which are the fermenting agents, known as ferments or yeast.

The decaying of the albumen in the grape juice affords conditions favorable for the multiplication of yeast germs which mix with those already present in the air and release a chemical enzyme capable of breaking down the grape sugar into two forms. One is ethyl alcohol, a colorless liquid that readily mixes with water and remains in solution in the wine. The other is carbon dioxide gas, which appears in tiny bubbles which give the appearance of ebullition.36

ebullition.36

The process of fermentation occurs only in the presence of certain conditions such as a moderate temperature, moisture and air in the grape juice. Now there are four major methods by which these conditions can be altered or eliminated and thus grape juice be preserved fresh and unfermented. We shall now consider each of these four methods, all of which were known to the ancients.

1. The Preservation of Grape Juice by Boiling

Moisture and Heat. The fermentation of grape juice can be prevented by reducing sufficiently its moisture content or by heating the juice at high temperature. The reason for this is that the growth of the yeast germs, which are the fermenting agents, slows or stops entirely when the moisture content of the grape juice is heated at 150º to 180º F. At such a temperature most of the ferments are destroyed. Both of these results are achieved by boiling the grape juice.

By boiling, the water of the grape juice evaporates, yeasts and molds are destroyed, and the sugar content increases, thus inhibiting yeast growth. This method of preserving grape juice unfermented by carefully boiling it down to a syrup was commonly and successfully used in the ancient world. When desired, the syrup would be drunk diluted with water. Several sources confirm this practice.

Ancient Testimonies. The most celebrated Roman poet, Virgil (70-19 B.C.), in his *Georgics*, pictures a housewife thus "She boils down by the fire the moisture of sweet must, and skims off with leaves the wavy froth of the simmering caldron."37 This method was widely used, as indicated by Columella’s lengthy description of how to preserve must successfully by boiling it down. "Care should also be taken," he writes, "so that the must, when it has been pressed out, may last well or at any rate keep until it is sold."38

To ensure its preservation, Columella explains that "some people put the must in leaden vessels and by boiling reduce it by a quarter, others by a third. There is no doubt

that anyone who boiled it down to one-half would be likely to make a better thick form of must."39 Must boiled-down to a third was called *defrutum*: "Must of the sweetest possible flower will be boiled-down to a third of its original volume and when boiled-down . . . is called *defrutum*."40

Pliny differs from Columella by calling *defrutum* the must boiled-down to one-half and *sapa*, the must boiled-down to a third. In discussing the various kinds of "sweet wine" (*vinum dulce*), he writes: "*Siraeum*, by some called *hepsema* and in our country *sapa*, is a product of art, not of nature, made by boiling down must to a third of its quantity; must boiled-down to only one-half is called *defrutum*."41 The difference in the names given to the different kinds of boiled-down must, only serves to confirm the common usage of this beverage.

The preservation of must by boiling required considerable care. Columella gives us this insightful description: "We shall heat the furnace at first with gentle fire and with only very small pieces of wood, which the country people call *cremia* (brushwood), so that the must may boil in a leisurely manner. The man in charge of this boiling should have ready prepared strainers made of rushes or broom, but the latter should be in a raw state, that is to say, not beaten with a hammer. He should . . . stir up any dregs which have settled at the bottom and bring them up to the top; he should then clear away with the strainer any scum which remains on the surface, and he should go on doing this until the must seems cleared of all lees."42

Safe Preservation. When the necessary care was exercised, the boiled grape juice could be safely preserved for a long time. This required lengthy boiling and careful removal of all scum, as Columella explains: "If there is plenty of wood, it is better to boil the must and clear off all the scum with the dregs; if this is done a tenth part will be lost, but the rest keeps good forever."43

This method of preservation was especially recommended by Columella for "any estate where the wine often turns acid." In this case, all the must was to be poured into the cauldron and boiled until a tenth part of it evaporated. "Afterwards, when it has cooled, you should pour it into

vessels, cover it and seal it up; in this way it will keep longer and no harm will befall it."44

Wide Use of Boiled Grape Juice. The custom of preserving grape juice by boiling it down into a syrup has survived through the centuries in the Near East and mediterranean countries. This beverage is known as *vino cotto* (boiled wine) in Italian, *vin cuit* in French, *nardenk* in Syriac and *dibs* in Arabic. In its article on "Wine," the John Kitto's old but renowned *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* quotes several nineteenth century historians on the use of boiled grape juice in the Near East. One of them, Dr. A. Russell, in his *Natural History of Aleppo*, writes: "The inspissated juice of the grape, *sapa vini*, called here *dibbs*, is brought to the city in skins, and sold in the public markets; it has much the appearance of coarse honey, is of sweet taste, and in great use among the people of all sorts."45

Similarly, Cyrus Redding, in his *History of Modern Wines*, states: "On Mount Libanus, at Kesroan, good wines are made, but they are for the most part *vins cuits* (boiled wines). The wine is preserved in jars."46 J. D. Paxton, who witnessed a vintage in Lebanon, also says: "The juice that was extracted when I visited the press was not made into (what is now called) wine, but into what is called *dibs*."47 The common use of unfermented, "boiled wine" in the Near East during the nineteenth century is also attested by several travel accounts.48

Rev. Henry Homes, an American missionary to Constantinople, in his article on wine published in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (May 1848) gives this account of his observations: "Simple grape-juice, without the addition of any earth to neutralize the acidity, is boiled from four to five hours, so as to reduce it one-fourth the quantity put in. After the boiling, for preserving it cool, and that it be *less liable to ferment*, it is put into earthen instead of wooden vessels, closely tied over with skin to exclude the air. It ordinarily has not a particle of intoxicating quality, being used freely by both Mohammedans and Christians. Some which I have had on hand for two years has undergone no change."49

Dilution of Boiled Grape Juice. It was a common practice in ancient times to dilute both fermented and unfermented wines. In Rome a public establishment existed for this purpose, known as the *Thermopolium*. It furnished its patrons both cold and hot water to dilute their wines. "The hot water," as Sir Edward Barry observes in his treatise *Observation on the Wines of the Ancients*, "was often *necessary* to dissolve their more inspissated and old wines."50

The dilution was especially necessary for those wines which had been reduced to a kind of thick cream through boiling. Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher who lived in the fourth century B.C., says that the wine of Arcadia was so thick that it was necessary to scrape it from the skin bottles in which it was contained and to dissolve the scraping in water.51 Similar, very likely, was the Teniotic wine of Egypt, which Athenaeus, a Greek grammarian who lived in the second century A.D., tells us had "such a degree of richness [*liparon*, literally, ‘fatness’], that when mixed with water it seems gradually to be diluted, much in the same way as Attic honey well mixed."52

Several ancient authors refer to the custom of diluting fermented wines. "Hesiod prescribed, during the summer months, three parts of water to one of wine. Nicochares considers two parts of wine to five of water as the proper proportion. However, according to Homer, Pranmian and Meronian wines required twenty parts of water to one of wine. Hippocrates considered twenty parts of water to one of the Thracian wine to be the proper beverage."53

It seems reasonable to assume that those wines which were diluted with twenty parts of water were the boiled, condensed grape juices mentioned above. A lover of fermented wines would hardly have enjoyed drinking a wine which had been diluted with 95% of water. Thus, the wines which were heavily diluted must have been primarily unfermented grape juices, thickly condensed through boiling.

Boiled Grape Juice among the Jews. Several reasons lead us to believe that the boiling process was most probably used also in ancient Israel to preserve grape

probably used also in ancient Israel to preserve grape juice. The art of making and preserving wine was common to Mediterranean countries where viticulture prevailed, and has survived to the present.54 There are indications that the ancient Jews preserved wine by boiling it. John Kitto's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* says: "The Mishna states that the Jews were in the habit of using *boiled wine*. 'They do not boil the wine of the heave-offering, *because it diminishes it*,' and consequently thickens it, thus rendering the mingling of water with it when drunk necessary; but it is immediately added, 'Rabbi Yehudah permits this *because it improves it*' (*Teroomoth Perek* 100, 11)."55

In the talmudic treatise entitled *'Abodah Zarah* there is a lengthy discussion on what some rabbis thought of the use of boiled wine. One of the issues discussed is whether a Jew could use boiled wine which he had handed over for storage to a Gentile. The fear was that the Gentile might have offered it to an idol. Rabbi Ashi dismissed such a fear, saying: "Our boiled wine which is in the keeping of a heathen does not require double sealing. For as to the fear lest he would offer it to the idol, it is not offered in that state."56 The reason is, as the footnote explains, that Gentiles used only raw wine for their sacrificial offering. Boiled wine was unacceptable for their sacrifices, and consequently there was no fear of its being offered to an idol.57

Another issue discussed is whether boiled wine left uncovered became unfit for use. On this issue the renowned Rabbi Hiyya deliberated: "Boiled wine is not rendered unfit by being left uncovered."58 The reason given in the footnote is that "a snake does not drink it."59 The popular notion appears to have been that snakes were fond of fermented wine but did not touch boiled wine. Consequently fermented wine needed to be covered lest it be poisoned by a snake, but boiled grape juice could remain uncovered because snakes would not touch it. These incidental remarks provide an indirect and yet compelling evidence that boiled wine was produced and used by Jews.

Boiled Grape Juice in Ancient Israel? It is hard to tell how extensive the use of boiled wine was in ancient Israel

is hard to tell. But there is no reason to doubt that it was used. Some of the Biblical references to "honey—*debash*" could be referring to a sweet grape syrup. The Hebrew *debash* corresponds to the Arabic *dibs*, which is the usual term for a sweet syrup made by boiling down the juice of grapes, raisins or dates. In his article on "honey" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, J. I. Ross writes: "The honey of the Bible was of three different kinds: (a) a thick grape syrup (Arabic *dibs*); (b) wild honey . . . (c) honey from domesticated bees."60

Some scholars maintain that certain Old Testament texts refer not to bee's honey but to a grape syrup. For example, in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, J. A. de Bost states: "Some authors believe that several Old Testament texts, namely Gen 43:11; Ezek 27:17, Jer 41:8 do not refer to bee's honey but to a sweet beverage, a syrup that drips from ripe dates (these are the Hebrew scholars Maimonides, Josephus, Hiller, Celsius, Geddes, etc.). They appeal, among other things, to the fact that the Hebrew word *debash*, which means honey, in Arabic has the meaning of dates. Other scholars maintain that the word must be understood as grapes' honey, that is, grape juice boiled with or without sugar until it becomes thick as a syrup (Rosenmüller). This beverage is made even today in Syria and Palestine (Shaw, Russell, Burckhardt). 150 kilos of grapes produce 50 kilos of this beverage, called *dibs* (*debash*). It is used instead of sugar, diluting it with water. For the poor it replaces butter and for the sick wine. The Greeks and the Romans knew the honey of grapes."61

The account of the spies in Numbers 13 may support the meaning of *debash* as the honey of grapes. The spies "came to the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they brought also some pomegranates and figs" (v. 23). In front of the fruits which the spies brought back as proof of the fertility of the land, namely, an enormous cluster of grapes with pomegranates and figs, they said: "We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey [*debash*], and this is its fruit" (v. 27). Since the fruits shown to prove that the land flowed with "milk and honey" were especially the incredibly

large grapes, "honey" may refer to boiled grape juice, known as "grapes' honey—*dibs*," produced with the kind of grapes displayed, and "milk" may signify the green pastures which nourished the milk-producing cows. The emphasis appears to be on the value of the natural products of the land.

The *Encyclopedia Biblica* notes in this regard that "in later Hebrew certainly, and in OT possibly, *debash* is also used to denote certain artificial preparations made from the juice of various fruits by inspissation, like the modern *dibs*. Reference has already been made to the theory that the 'honey' with which the land of Canaan was said to 'flow' was this inspissated syrup; it has also been held that at least the honey intended for transport (Gen 43:11; 1 King 14:3) and export (Ezek 27:17) must be so understood."[62]

Speaking of grape juice, the article continues, saying: "The early inhabitants of Canaan, however, as Bliss appears to have shown, were certainly acquainted with this manufacture. His excavations at Tell el-Hesy (Lachish) revealed two wine-presses with apparatus (as he judged) for boiling down the filtered juice (inspissation) into grape syrup."[63] The preceding observations give us reason to believe that the boiling process was most probably used by the ancient Jews to preserve grape juice unfermented.

2. The Preservation of Grape Juice through Filtration

Separation of Albumen. Another method by which the fermentation of grape juice can be prevented is by separating the albumen, which is located in the lining of the skin and in the envelope of the seeds of the grape, from the other elements. The albumen, as noted earlier, contains the fermenting agents, known as ferments or yeast. By careful procedures the juice of the grapes can be separated from the fermenting pulp. The ancients understood this principle and applied it in two ways: (1) gentle pressing, (2) filtration.

Gentle Pressing. The grapes were brought in from the vineyard and placed in wine vats. The first juice that flowed before the treading began, according to Pliny, was called *protropum*. "The name," he explains, "was given by some

protropum." The name," he explains, "was given by some people to must that flows down of its own accord before the grapes are trodden."64 This juice, that flowed spontaneously from the grapes, was composed almost entirely of the sugar portion of the grapes. The high sugar content of the juice, combined with its relative freedom from yeast, would make its preservation in an air tight container relatively easy.

In this particular passage Pliny mentions that *protropum* was allowed to ferment. But this was not always the case. Other passages now to be considered indicate that the first juice as well as the subsequent juice which flowed from gently pressed grapes was preserved unfermented.

After discussing two "sweet wines," namely *sapa* and *defrutum*, which were made by boiling down the must respectively to a third and to one-half of its volume, Pliny mentions the raisin-wine, known as *passum*, which was well known under different names in most Mediterranean countries. This unfermented grape juice was made by drying the grapes in the sun and then gently pressing out the juice. "Some people," Pliny explains, "make this wine from any sweet white grapes that ripen early, drying them in the sun till little more than half their weight remains and then they gently press out the juice [*leniter exprimunt*]."65

By pressing out gently the sun-dried grapes only the rich juice would be released. Because of its high sugar content and the absence of the fermenting pulp, this juice could be more readily preserved. Sometimes the level of sugar was raised by adding honey. Speaking of "honey-wine," Pliny says: "it differs from mead because it is made from must, in the proportion of thirty pints of must of a dry quality to six pints of honey and a cup of salt, this mixture being brought just to the boil."66

Polybius, an historian of the second century B.C., tells us that "among the Romans women are forbidden to drink [fermented] wine; and they drink what is called *passum*, which is made from raisins, and tastes very much like the sweet wine [*gleukos*] of Aegosthena or Crete. This is what they do to quench their thirst. But it is almost impossible for them to drink wine without being found out."67 It is noteworthy that unfermented grape juice made from sun

noteworthy that unfermented grape juice made from sun-dried grapes was drunk especially by women in the Roman society.

The importance of pressing the grapes gently to prevent the escape of the albumen is emphasized also by Columella. Speaking of sun-dried grapes, he says, "Tread them on the fourth day and pour the must, which should have none of the last squeezing in it."68 The Latin verb used for "tread" is *calcato*, which means "trodden by foot." Thus the juice was to be removed after treading the grapes by foot and before their squeezing with the heavy beam (*tortivo*). The latter would release the fermenting yeast located in the lining of the skin of the grapes.

To prevent the fermentation of gently pressed grape juice, it was necessary to pour it into properly sealed jars which would be stored in a cool place. Columella gives us an informative description of how they did it: "That must may remain always as sweet as though it were fresh, do as follows. Before the grape-skins are put under the press, take from the vat some of the freshest possible must and put it in a new wine-jar; then daub it over and cover it carefully with pitch, that thus no water may be able to get in. Then sink the whole flagon in a pool of cold, fresh water so that no part of it is above the surface. Then after forty days take it out of the water. The must will then keep sweet for as much as a year."69

The importance of storing the juice in a cool place will be discussed later. At this point it is important to note the caution taken in utilizing "the freshest possible must" which flowed before the grape-skins were put to the press. This would ensure that the juice would be rather free of the fermention-causing yeast found in the lining of the skin of the grapes.

Filtration. When the fermentable pulp was pressed out together with the saccharin juice, a separation of the former was still possible by means of filtration. It is evident that the ancient means of filtration were far less sophisticated and efficient than those used by the wine industry today. Their basic method consisted of using a bag, called *sacco*, in which the grapes were placed. A vase was placed below the bag to receive the falling juice

vase was placed below the bag to receive the falling juice. Several Latin writers refer to the use of such strainers or filters in the preparation of wines.

The Roman poet Virgil (70-19 B.C.) mentions the sackcloth (*cola*) as one of the standard pieces of equipment of the wine press (*prelum*). Its purpose, as Pliny points out, was to remove the fermentable substances from the juice: "Wines are most beneficial when all their potency has been overcome by the strainer [*sacco*]. We must remember that wine is grape juice that has acquired strength by fermentation."71 In this statement Pliny clearly explains that the purpose of the strainer (*sacco*) was to remove the fermentable substances which give alcoholic potency to the wine.

It is certain that grape juice was filtered to deprive it of the intoxicating power caused by fermentation. Plutarch, the first-century Greek biographer and moralist, after speaking of the filtering process in very much the same words as Pliny, says: "Wine is rendered old, or feeble in strength, when it is frequently filtered. The strength being thus excluded, the wine neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind and passions, and is much more pleasant to drink."72

It is noteworthy that Plutarch observes that the filtered, non-alcoholic wine was "more pleasant to drink" than the alcoholic variety. This observation can help us understand the nature of the "good wine" produced by Christ at the wedding of Cana (John 2:10). A reason for the production of filtered wines was, according to Pliny, to enable people to drink more without becoming intoxicated: "What is more, to enable us to take more, we reduce its strength by means of a linen strainer."73

It is significant to note in this connection the comment of the Delphin edition on Horace’s words, "Strain clear the wine," which says: "The ancients filtered and defecated their must repeatedly before it could have fermented; and thus the faeces which nourish the strength of the wine being taken away, they rendered the wine itself more liquid, weaker, lighter and sweeter, and more pleasant to drink."74

A Biblical Allusion. Isaiah 25:6 may contain an allusion to the Biblical custom of filtering the must. The text reads: "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow of wine on the lees well refined." The word "wine" present in the two phrases, "wine on the lees" and "wine on the lees well refined" (RSV), is not found in the Hebrew text. Instead, the Hebrew term used is *shemarim*, which means "preserves," a term which can refer to vintage-produce. Thus, a more accurate translation would be "a feast of vintage-produce" and "a feast of vintage-produce well cleansed." The Vulgate (Latin) translation respects this meaning: "a feast of vintage-produce (*convivium vindemiae*), a feast of vintage-produce well-cleansed (*vindemiae defaecatae*)."

In this verse God compares the blessings of the Gospel feast to His providing of two festal luxuries: fat things—rich, marrowy meats—and confections such as jellies and syrups. The former would be served in the most savory way and the latter in their purest state. The "vintage-produce well cleansed" could refer to the filtered grape juice, which on account of its purity and sweetness was regarded, as we have seen, as most pleasant to drink. This harmless nutritious drink fits the emblem of the blessings of salvation which here God promises to all the redeemed.

3. The Preservation of Grape Juice Through Cold Storage

Below 40º Fahrenheit. The fermentation of grape juice can be prevented also by keeping it below 40º F (4º Celsius). Nearly all processes of fermentation cease at about 40º F. Fermentation is possible only between about 40º and 80º F(4º and 27º Celsius). Below the former point fermentation is inoperative and above the latter point the acetous supplants the vinous process. By lowering the temperature to about 40º F., the albumen settles at the bottom and the juice does not ferment.

Ancient Method. The ancients were familiar with this method of preservation. When they desired to preserve

grape juice in its sweet, unfermented state, they would take a*n amph*ora and coat it with pitch within and without. Then they would fill it wi*th mustum lixivi*um—the must that flowed before the grapes would be pressed with a heavy beam—and they would seal it carefully with pitch. It was then immersed in a pool of cool water or a cistern and allowed to remain undisturbed for six weeks or two months. After this process the grape juice could remain unfermented and hence it was called *semper mustum*, that is, *permanent must*.

We cited earlier a description of this process as given by Columella. To ensure that must remains *semper dulce* "always sweet," Columella prescribes this procedure: "Before the grape-skins are put under the press, take from the vat some of the freshest possible must and put it in a new wine-jar; then daub it over and cover it carefully with pitch, that thus no water may be able to get in. Then sink the whole flagon in a pool of cold, fresh water so that no part of it is above the surface. Then after forty days take it out of the water. The must will then keep sweet for as much as a year."75 Columella goes on to say that "for as long as it is properly cold, so long will it remain in good condition."76

In the method described by Columella fermentation was prevented in two ways: (1) by the exclusion of the air, (2) by the reduction of the temperature. The yeast germs are introduced by the action of ordinary air into the fermentable juice. Thus, by placing the grape juice in air-tight wine jars, fermentation was unlikely to occur, especially since the jars were kept in a cold pool.

A similar description of this process is provided by Pliny. Speaking of the sweet wine called *aigleuko*s by the Greeks and *semper mustum* "permanent must" by the Romans, he says: "Care is needed for its production, as it must not be allowed to boil [*fervere*, to ferment]—that is the word the Romans used to denote the passage of must into wine. Consequently, as soon as the must is taken from the vat and put into casks they plunge the casks in water till midwinter passes and regular cold weather sets in."77

This method of preserving grape juice must have been in

use long before the time of Pliny and Columella, because Cato (234-149 B.C.) mentions it two centuries before them: "If you wish to keep grape juice through the whole year, put the grape juice in an amphora, seal the stopper with pitch, and sink in the pond. Take it out after thirty days; it will remain sweet the whole year."[78]

Gibeon's Wine Cellars. It seems reasonable to presume that the Jews knew and used the Roman method of preserving grape juice in air-tight jars, stored in a cold place. The various techniques for making and preserving wine, according to the Roman authors cited earlier, seemed to have been well known throughout the Mediterranean world. Explicit information about Palestine, however, is lacking.

Some indirect information is provided by James B. Pritchard, who excavated the ancient Gibeon where sixty-three storage wine-vats were found, with a holding capacity of 25,000 gallons. His reconstruction of the process of wine making at Gibeon includes the filtration of the pressed juice into two cylindrical tanks 2 ft. in diameter and 2 ft. deep. After filtering the wine was stored in cool cellars in large jars sealed with olive oil.[79] Pritchard tested a suggestion of a local wine maker that wine would keep from turning into vinegar in the cellar, if it was sealed with olive oil. The excavators stored a jar of wine sealed with a film of olive oil for a month in the cellars of Gibeon. To their delight they found at the end of the month that the wine was perfectly preserved.[80] The reason was that the oil provided a practical barrier preventing the oxidation of the wine.

The success of the experiment suggests the possibility that the same method could have been used for preserving unfermented grape juice. Freshly pressed grape juice, after being filtered to eliminate glutinous material, could have been stored in cool cellars in jars sealed with olive oil. To some extent this method was used by my father when I was a boy. I recall helping him to filter the grape juice through a thick linen sack and then pouring the juice into bottles which were sealed with a film of oil and a tight cork. The bottles would be stored in a cool cellar. Today, with the availability of bottle caps which seal bottles

hermetically, my father follows a simpler procedure. He boils the must and pours it into bottles which he seals immediately with bottle caps pressed tight by a simple machine. He then stores the bottles in a cool cellar.

The frequent linkage in the Old Testament of olive oil and wine may suggest not only the common use of the two products, but also the dependency upon the former to preserve the latter.

4. The Preservation of Grape Juice

Through Sulphur Fumigation

Sulphur Fumigation. The fermentation of grape juice can also be prevented by the fumes of sulphur dioxide. The method consists in filling the jars nearly full with fresh unfermented grape juice, then burning sulphur dioxide in the empty portion, and while the sulphur fumes are present, the jars are tightly closed. Another possibility is to pour the must into jars or bottles which have been strongly treated with sulphur fumes. The sulphur absorbs the oxygen of the air and inhibits the formation of yeast germs. Sulphur dioxide is widely used today in the wine industry to deal with some of the infection to which wine is subject.

Ancient Use of Sulphur. The use of sulphur to preserve wine was known in the ancient world. In a chapter devoted to various methods used to preserve wine, Pliny speaks of Cato who "mentions sulphur."81 Horace alludes to this practice in a poem dedicated to the celebration of a glad anniversary: "This festal day, each time the year revolves, shall draw a well-pitched cork forth from a jar set to drink the smoke in Tullus' consulship."82 The next stanza suggests that this fumigated wine was unfermented, because a hundred cups of it could be drunk without causing "clamor et ira," that is, "brawls and anger."83

In his book on *Roman Antiquities*, T. S. Carr says that "the application of the *fumarium* [sulphur fumes] to the mellowing of wines was borrowed from the Asiatics; and thus exhalation would go on until the wine was reduced to the state of syrup."84 In its comment on this statement, John Kitto's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* says: "When

the Mishna forbids *smoked wines* from being used in offerings (*Manachoth*, viii. 6, et comment.), it has chiefly reference to the Roman practice of fumigating them with sulphur, the vapor of which absorbed the oxygen, and thus arrested the fermentation. The Jews carefully eschewed the wines and vinegar of the Gentiles."85

CONCLUSION

The study conducted in this chapter on the ancient methods of preserving both fermented wine and unfermented grape juice should help dispel two major misconceptions: (1) In the ancient world it was easy to preserve fermented wine because all that it takes is to let the pressed juice ferment naturally; (2) In the ancient world it was impossible to preserve the grape juice unfermented because people had neither the technical knowledge nor the means to prevent fermentation.

We have found that both of these popular notions are unfounded. The problems the ancients encountered in preserving fermented wine were as great as, if not actually greater, than, those faced in preserving unfermented grape juice. To prevent wine from becoming acid, moldy, or bad-smelling a host of preservatives were used such as salt, sea-water, liquid or solid pitch, boiled-down must, marble dust, lime, sulphur fumes or crushed iris.

In comparison to preserving fermented wine, the keeping of grape juice from fermenting was a relatively simple process. It was accomplished simply by boiling the juice down to a syrup, or by separating the fermentable pulp from the juice of the grape by means of filtration, or by placing the grape juice in sealed jars which were immersed in a pool of cold water, or by fumigating with sulphur the wine jars before sealing them. The use of such techniques clearly indicates that the means of preserving grape juice without fermentation were known and used in the ancient world.

The fact that the documentation comes mostly from the classical world rather than from the Old Testament world does not mean that the art of preserving grape juice was unknown in ancient Israel. The Jews were not less

knowledgeable in the art of preserving fruits, cereals and juices than were the surrounding nations. We found that, according to Josephus, the Romans were astonished to find in the fortress of Masada, wine, oil, fruits and cereals freshly preserved, though they had been stored for several years.86 Furthermore, rabbinical sources mention specifically the use of boiled wine.

The reason for the silence of Scripture on the *means* used for preserving grape juice is to be found in the nature of the Bible itself, a book which deals primarily with those aspects of life which are related to salvation history. In the Bible we find no treatise on agriculture, as among classical writers. The reason is not a lack of interest or of knowledge of farming, but a reluctance to deal with issues unrelated to the religious life of God's people.

No mention is made in the Bible of the means used to prevent the spoilage of fermented wine, yet the Jews must have known them. The same holds true for unfermented grape juice. The Bible attests that God's people did have and did use unfermented grape juice. We are not told how the Jews preserved the grape juice unfermented. We have reasons to believe that they knew some methods of preservation known and used in the ancient world. This conclusion will be confirmed in the next two chapters, which examine the teaching of Jesus and of the apostolic church regarding alcoholic beverages.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

1. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* 1939 ed., s. v. "Wine," by Burton Scott Easton, vol. 5, p. 3086.

2. Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 7, 8, 4, trans. William Whiston, *Josephus Complete Works* (Grand Rapids, 1974), p. 599.

3. Columella, *On Agriculture* 12, 10, 3, trans. E. S. Forster and Edward H. Heffner, *The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1955). All the quotations from Columella are taken from this edition. Henceforth only the title of Columella's work will be given.

4. Ibid., 12, 10, 4.

4. Ibid., 12, 10, 4.

5. Ibid., 12, 11, 1-2; 12, 12, 3.

6. Ibid., 12, 47, 4.

7. Ibid., 12, 46, 6.

8. Ibid., 12, 46, 5.

9. Ibid., 12, 44, 1.

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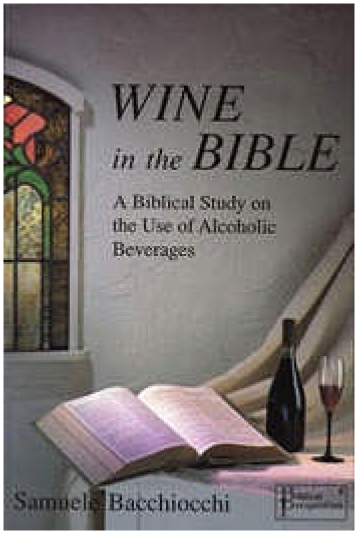
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Five of the nine chapters can be accessed by clicking their titles below:

WINE IN THE BIBLE: A BIBLICAL STUDY ON THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Chapter 5

JESUS AND WINE

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Many well-meaning Christians find the fundamental justification for their moderate drinking of alcoholic beverages in the teachings and example of Jesus. For example, in his book *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*, Kenneth L. Gentry appeals first of all to Christ's example to defend a moderate partaking of alcoholic beverages: "First, we must again be reminded that the Lord and his apostles partook of [fermented] wine despite the fact that sinful men indulged in it to their own hurt and degradation."1

It is alleged that Christ not only partook of fermented wine but also produced it in abundant quantity at the wedding of Cana and gave it to His disciples at the Last Supper. Norman L. Geisler, for example, explicitly states in his article "A Christian Perspective on Wine-Drinking" that "it is false to say that Jesus made unfermented wine. As a matter of fact, He made wine that tasted so good the people at the wedding feast in Cana said it was better than the wine they had just drunk. Surely they would not have said this if it had tasted flat to them. In fact in John 2:9-10 it is called 'wine' (*oinos*) and 'good wine' (*kalon oinon*). These are the same words used for fermented wine elsewhere in the New Testament."2

The popular belief that "Jesus was not a teetotaler," but a moderate drinker of fermented wine who even "miraculously 'manufactured' a high-quality (alcoholic) wine at Cana"3 and instituted the Last Supper with alcoholic wine,4 has no doubt influenced the drinking habits of millions of Christians around the world more than anything else that the Bible says about drinking. The reason is simple. The example and teachings of Christ are

normative for Christian belief and practice. If Christ made, commended and used fermented wine, then there can hardly be anything intrinsically wrong with a moderate drinking of alcoholic beverages! Simply stated, "If wine was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for me!"

Objective and Procedure. In view of the fundamental importance and far-reaching consequences of Christ's example and teachings on drinking, we will closely examine in this chapter what the Gospels tell us about Jesus and wine. Our primary objective is to ascertain whether indeed Christ by His teachings and example sanctioned the use of fermented wine.

The chapter is divided into the following five wine-related stories or sayings:

(1) The Wedding at Cana: John 2:1-11.

(2) New Wine in New Wineskins: Luke 5:37-38; Mark 2:22.

(3) Is Old Wine is Better? Luke 5:39.

(4) Was Jesus a Glutton and a Drunkard? Matthew 11:19;

Luke 7:34.

(5) The Communion Wine: Matthew 26:26-29;

Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23.

PART I: THE WEDDING AT CANA

Importance of the Miracle. Moderationists view Christ's miraculous transformation of water into wine at the wedding of Cana as primary evidence of Jesus' sanctioning the use of alcoholic beverages. They argue that if Jesus produced between 120 and 160 gallons of high-quality alcoholic wine for the wedding party and guests at Cana, it is evident that He approved of its use in moderation.

The belief that the wine Christ provided in Cana was alcoholic rests on five major assumptions. First, it is

assumed that the word *oinos* "wine" indicates only "fermented-quality grape drink, i.e. wine."[5] Second, it is assumed that since the word *oinos* "wine" is used in reference both to the wine which ran out and the wine that Christ made, both wines must have been alcoholic. Third, it is assumed that the Jews did not know how to prevent the fermentation of grape juice; and since, as argued by William Hendriksen, the season of the wedding was just before Spring Passover (cf. John 2:13), that is, six months after the grape harvest, the wine used at Cana had ample time to ferment.[6] Fourth, it is assumed that the description given by the master of the banquet to the wine provided by Christ as "the good wine" means a high-quality alcoholic wine.[7] Fifth, it is assumed that the expression "well drunk" (John 2:10) used by the master of the banquet indicates that the guests were intoxicated because they had been drinking fermented wine. Consequently, the wine Jesus made must also have been fermented.[8] In view of the importance these assumptions play in determining the nature of the wine provided by Christ, we shall examine each of them briefly in the order given.

The Meaning of *Oinos*. The popular assumption that both in secular and Biblical Greek the word *oinos* meant fermented grape juice exclusively was examined at great length in Chapter 2. We submitted numerous examples from both pagan and Christian authors who used the Greek word *oinos* referring both to fermented and unfermented grape juice. We also noticed that *oinos* is used at least 33 times in the Septuagint to translate *tirosh,* the Hebrew word for grape juice.

A better acquaintance with the use of the word "wine," not only in the Greek language, but also in old English, Latin and Hebrew, would have saved scholars from falling into the mistaken conclusion that *oinos* means only fermented wine. The truth of the matter is, as we have shown, that *oinos* is a generic term, including all kinds of wine, unfermented and fermented, like *yayin* in Hebrew and *vinum* in Latin. Thus the fact that the wine made by Christ at Cana is called *oinos*, offers no ground for concluding that it was fermented wine. Its nature must be determined by internal evidence and moral likelihood. The record of the evangelist, as we shall see, affords information for

the evangelist, as we shall see, affords information for determining this question.

Is *Oinos* Always Alcoholic? The second assumption, that both the wine that ran out and the wine Jesus made were alcoholic, depends largely upon the first assumption, namely, that the word *oinos* means exclusively alcoholic wine. As stated by Kenneth L. Gentry, "The word *oinos* is used in reference to both wines in question. It has been shown that this word indicates fermented-quality grape drink, i.e. wine."[9]

This assumption is discredited by two facts. First, as mentioned earlier, the word *oinos* is a generic term referring either to fermented or to unfermented wine. Thus the fact that the same word *oinos* is used for both wines in question does not necessitate that both wines be alcoholic. In his booklet *Christ, the Apostles and Wine*, Ernest Gordon responds in a similar vein to the same assumption, saying: "To the objection that the word *oinos*, wine, is used both for the intoxicating wine of the feast and the wine Christ made, and hence that both must have been intoxicating, one can quote Abbott, *Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, 'It is tolerably clear that the word wine does not necessarily imply fermented liquor. It signifies only a production of the vine.' The eminent Hellenist, Sir Richard Jebb, former Professor of Greek at the University of Cambridge, declared *oinos* "a general term which might include all kinds of beverages."[10]

Second, the wine provided by Christ is differentiated from the other by being characterized as *ton kalon,* "the good" wine. This suggests that the two wines were not identical. The nature of the difference between the two wines will be discussed below.

Preservation of Grape Juice. The third assumption, that it would have been impossible to supply unfermented grape juice for a Spring time wedding about six months after vintage, rests on the assumption that the technology for preserving grape juice unfermented was unknown at the time.

The latter assumption is clearly discredited by numerous

testimonies from the Roman world of New Testament times describing various methods for preserving grape juice. We have seen in Chapter 4 that the preservation of grape juice was in some ways a simpler process than the preservation of fermented wine. Thus, the possibility existed at the wedding of Cana to supply unfermented grape juice near the Passover season, since such a beverage could be kept unfermented throughout the year.

"High-Quality Alcoholic Wine." The fourth assumption is that the wine Jesus provided was pronounced "the good wine" (John 2:10) by the master of the banquet, because it was high in alcoholic content. Such an assumption is based on twentieth-century tastes.

Albert Barnes, a well-known New Testament scholar and commentator, warns in his comment on John 2:10 not to "be deceived by the phrase ‘good wine.’" The reason, he explains, is that "*We* use the phrase to denote that it is good in proportion to its strength, and its power to intoxicate. But no such sense is to be attached to the word here."11

We noted in Chapter 4 that in the Roman world of New Testament times, the *best wines were those whose alcoholic potency had been removed by boiling or filtration.* Pliny, for example, says that "wines are most beneficial (*utilissimum*) when all their potency has been removed by the strainer."12 Similarly, Plutarch points out that wine is "much more pleasant to drink" when it "neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind or passions"13 because its strength has been removed through frequent filtering.

Referring to some of the same ancient authors, Barnes says: "Pliny, Plutarch and Horace describe wine *as* good, or mention that *as the best* wine which *was harmless or innocent*—poculis *vini innocentis*. The most useful wine—*utilissimum vinum*—was that which had little strength; and the most wholesome wine—*saluberrimum vinum*—was that which had not been adulterated by ‘the addition of anything to the *must* or juice.’ Pliny expressly says that a ‘good wine’ was one that was destitute of spirit. Lib iv. c.13. It should not be assumed, therefore, that the ‘good

6:18. It should not be assumed, therefore, that the 'good wine' was *stronger* than the other. It is rather to be presumed that it was milder. That would be the *best* wine certainly. The wine referred to here was doubtless such as was commonly drunk in Palestine. That was the pure juice of the grape. It was not brandied wine; nor drugged wine; nor wine compounded of various substances such as we drink in this land. The common wine drunk in Palestine was that which was the simple juice of the grape."14

The wine Christ made was of high quality, not because of its alcohol content, but because, as Henry Morris explains, it was "new wine, freshly created! It was not old, decayed wine, as it would have to be if it were intoxicating. There was no time for the fermentation process to break down the structure of its energy-giving sugars into disintegrative alcohols. It thus was a fitting representation of His glory and was appropriate to serve as the very first of His great miracles (John 2:11)."15

Rabbinical Witness. The rabbinical witness on the nature of wine is not unanimous. Rabbi Isidore Koplowitz points out in his introduction to his collection of rabbinical statements on wine and strong drink that "it is true that some Talmudic doctors have sanctioned, aye, even recommended the moderate use of wine. But it is equally true that many Talmudic Rabbins have in vigorous words condemned the drinking of wine and strong drinks. Some Rabbins have even ascribed the downfall of Israel to wine."16 An example of disapproval is the statement, often repeated with minor variations by different rabbis, which says: "When wine enters into the system of a person, out goes sense, wherever there is wine there is no understanding."17

This awareness of the harmful effect of alcoholic wine explains why some rabbis recommended the use of boiled wine. Speaking of the latter, the Mishna says: "Rabbi Yehuda permits it [boiled wine as heave-offering], because it improves it [its quality]."18 "Such a wine," notes Kitto's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, "was esteemed [among the Jews] the richest and best wine."19 Elsewhere the Talmud indicates that drinking was forbidden to the accompaniment of musical instruments in festive occasions such as wedding (*Sotah* 48a; also *Mishna*

occasions such as wedding (*Sotah* 48a, also *Mishna Sotah* 9,11). The latter is confirmed by later testimonies of rabbis quoted later in this chapter in the discussion of the Passover wine. In the light of these testimonies and considerations we would conclude that *the wine provided by Christ was described as "the good wine" because it was not intoxicating*.

Moral Implications. Another reason leading us to reject the assumption that "the good wine" produced by Christ was high in alcoholic content is the negative reflection such an assumption casts upon the wisdom of the Son of God. If, in addition to the considerable quantity of alleged alcoholic wine already consumed, Christ miraculously produced between 120 and 160 gallons of intoxicating wine for the use of men, women and children gathered together at the wedding feast, then He must be held morally responsible for prolonging and increasing their intoxication. His miracle would only serve to sanction the excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages. If this conclusion is true, it destroys the sinlessness of Christ's nature and teachings.

Joseph P. Free rightly observes that the large amount of wine miraculously produced by Christ toward the end of a wedding feast proves either: "1. Excessive [alcoholic] drinking was allowable, or 2. The *oinos* in this case was grape juice. In the light of the whole Old Testament condemnation of wine, it certainly would appear that the beverage was grape juice."20

It is against the principle of Scriptural and moral analogy to suppose that Christ, the Creator of good things (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25; Col 1:16), would exert His supernatural energy to bring into existence an intoxicating wine which Scripture condemns as "a mocker" and "a brawler" (Prov 20:1) and which the Holy Spirit has chosen as the symbol of divine wrath.

Scriptural and moral consistency require that "the good wine" produced by Christ was fresh, unfermented grape juice. The very adjective used to describe the wine supports this conclusion. "It must be observed," notes Leon C. Field, "that the adjective used to describe the wine made by Christ is not *agathos*, good, simply, but

wine made by Christ is not *agathos*, *good,* simply, but *kalos, that which is morally excellent or befitting*. The term is suggestive of Theophrastus' characterization of unintoxicating wine as *moral* (*ethikos) wine*."21

Referring to the nature of the wine produced by Christ, Ellen White says: "The wine which Christ provided for the feast, and that which He gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was the pure juice of the grape. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine 'in the cluster,' and says, 'Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it'. . . The unfermented wine which He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. Its effect was to bring the taste into harmony with a healthful appetite."22

"Well Drunk." The final assumption to be examined relates to the expression "well drunk" (John 2:10) used by the banquet master. The full statement reads: "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2:10, KJV). The assumption is that since the Greek word *methusthosin* "well drunk" indicates drunkenness and since drunkenness is caused, according to the statement of the banquet master, by the "good wine" customarily served first, then "the good wine" provided by Christ must also have been intoxicating, because it is compared with the good wine usually served at the beginning of a feast.

Some view this meaning of the Greek verb *methusko* "to intoxicate" as an incontestable proof of the alcoholic nature of the wine produced by Christ. For example, in a scholarly review of John Ellis' book, *The Wine Question in the Light of the New Dispensation*, the reviewers say: "There is another incontestable proof [of the alcoholic nature of the wine produced by Christ] contained in the passage itself; the word *methusko* in Greek signifies 'to make drunk, to intoxicate'; in the passive 'to be drunk'; now this term is never used for designating the effects from any other than intoxicating drinks."23

This reasoning misinterprets and misapplies the comment of the master of the banquet, and overlooks the broader

usage of the verb. The comment in question was not made in reference to that particular party, but to the general practice among those who hold feasts: "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine . . ." (John 2:10, RSV). This remark, as many commentators recognize, forms parts of the stock in trade of a hired banquet master, rather than an actual description of the state of intoxication at a particular party.24

Another important consideration is the fact that the Greek verb *methusko* can mean "to drink freely" without any implication of intoxication. In his article on this verb in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Herbert Preisker observes that "*methuo* and *methuskomai* are mostly used literally in the NT for 'to be drunk' and 'to get drunk.' *Methuskomai is used with no ethical or religious judgment in John 2:10* in connection with the rule that the poorer wine is served only when the guests have drunk well."25

The Parkhurst Greek lexicon cites the Septuagint usage of the *methuo* word group in Old Testament passages as illustrative of the meaning "to drink freely": "*Methuo* . . . denotes in general to drink wine or strong drink more freely than usual, and that whether to drunkenness or not. Pass [ively] to drink freely and to cheerfulness, though not to drunkenness . . . John 2:10. And in this sense the verb is plainly used by the LXX (i.e. Septuagint), Gen 43:34; Cant 5:1; and also, I think, in Gen 9:21."26 The latter meaning is respected by the Revised Standard Version which renders it more accurately "when men have drunk freely."

The verb *methusko* in John 2:10 is used in the sense of satiation. It refers simply to the large quantity of wine generally consumed at a feast, without any reference to intoxicating effects. Those who wish to insist that the wine used at the feast was alcoholic and that Jesus also provided alcoholic wine, though of a better quality, are driven to the conclusion that Jesus provided a large additional quantity of intoxicating wine so that the wedding party could continue its reckless indulgence. Such a conclusion destroys the moral integrity of Christ's character.

The Object of the Miracle. The stated object of the miracle was for Christ to manifest His glory so that His disciples might believe in Him. This objective was accomplished: "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11). Christ's presence at a marriage feast was intended to show divine approval of the marriage institution and of the innocent enjoyments of social life. Yet all of these considerations were subservient to the manifestation of Christ's glory in fulfillment of His Messianic mission. The glory of God is revealed especially in His act of creation (Ps 19:1-2). Likewise, Christ's "eternal power and deity" (Rom 1:20) were manifested at the beginning of His miracles through an act of creation: "He . . . made the water wine" (John 4:46).

The wine of the miracle must have been identical to the wine found in the grape-clusters, because this is the only wine that God produces. "There is not a hint," writes R. A. Torrey, "that the wine He [Christ] made was intoxicating. It was fresh-made wine. New-made wine is never intoxicating. It is not intoxicating until some time after the process of fermentation has set in. Fermentation is a process of decay. There is not a hint that our Lord produced alcohol, which is a product of decay and death. He produced a living wine uncontaminated by fermentation."[27]

"I am satisfied," states William Pettingill, "that there was little resemblance in it [wine made by Christ] to the thing described in the Scripture of God as biting like a serpent and stinging like an adder (Prov 23:29-32). Doubtless rather it was like the heavenly fruit of the vine that He will drink new with His own in His Father's kingdom (Matt 26:29). No wonder the governor of the wedding feast at Cana pronounced it the best wine kept until the last. Never before had he tasted such wine, and never did he taste it again."[28]

Christ's miracles were always directed to benevolent ends. He "came not to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:56). If it were true that Christ miraculously

manufactured an intoxicating wine, then that miracle would be a notable exception among His miracles. It would be a malevolent manifestation of His power. He would have manifested shame rather than glory.

Christ was aware of the powerful influence His example would have on contemporary and future generations. If, with all this knowledge He created an intoxicating wine, He would have revealed diabolic rather than divine power and glory. His disciples could hardly have believed in Him, if they had seen Him do a miracle to encourage drunkenness.

Leon C. Field aptly observes that Christ "was not Mohammed, holding out to men the allurement of sensual paradise, but a 'man of sorrow,' whose stern requirement of all who came after him was, that they should deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him (Matt 16:24). And it was by the personal embodiment and the practical encouragement of self-denial and abstinence, and not by the example or sanction of luxury and self-indulgence, that he won his followers and achieved his victories."29

PART II: NEW WINE IN NEW WINESKINS

Importance of the Saying. Christ's allusions to wine in Matthew 9:17 and Luke 5:39 are seen by moderationists as an indication of His approval of the moderate use of alcoholic wine. While the miracle of the wine at the wedding of Cana allegedly proves that Jesus *made* alcoholic wine, the two sayings to be examined now supposedly show that Jesus *commended* the moderate use of alcoholic wine. The first saying occurs in the three parallel passages (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-38). The second is found only in Luke 5:39 as an additional statement not found in the narratives of either Matthew or Mark. Since Luke incorporates both sayings, we shall confine ourselves to the passage as found in Luke, which says: "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'the old is good'" (Luke 5:37-39).

"New Wine": Fermented or Unfermented? The phrase "new wine" (*oinos neos*) occurs in the New Testament only in this passage and those parallel to it. The question here is the nature of the "new wine." Is it fermented or unfermented? A common view is that it denotes wine recently pressed, but already in a state of active fermentation. Such wine, it is said, could only be safely placed in new wineskins, because they alone were elastic enough to withstand the pressure of the gas-producing fermentation.

This view is expressed, for example, by Jimmy L. Albright in his dissertation on "Wine in the Biblical World." He writes: "The biblical mention of bursting wineskins (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37) shows that gas-producing fermentation took place in the wines produced in Israel, a chemical action that began within a few hours after the pressing of the grapes. The juice usually had begun to ferment as it stood in the lower pressing vats but was soon poured into jars or into skins. . . . Freshly made wine was put into new wineskins; old skins would burst under the pressure."30

In a similar vein R. C. Lenski comments: "When it is fresh, the skin stretches to a degree, but when it is old it becomes stiff and bursts quickly under pressure. People therefore never put new wine, which still ferments and causes pressure, into old, dried-out skins."31

This popular interpretation is very imaginative but not factual. Anyone familiar with the pressure caused by the gas-producing fermentation knows that no bottle, whether of skin or glass, can withstand such pressure. Job knew this when he said: "Behold, my heart is like wine that has no vent; like *new wineskins*, it is ready to burst" (Job 32:19). The *Encyclopedia Biblica* acknowledges this fact, saying: "It is impossible that the must could ever have been put into skins to undergo the whole process of fermentation, as is usually stated, the action of the gas given off in the early stages of the process being much too violent for any skins to withstand. Where a large quantity of grapes had to be trodden, it was necessary to relieve the wine vat by transferring the must immediately to

earthenware jars, of which the Jews possessed a large variety."32

Unfermented Grape Juice. "The difficulty connected with this parabolic word," as Alexander B. Bruce rightly points out, "is not critical or exegetical, but scientific. The question has been raised: could even new, tough skins stand the process of fermentation?" The answer is obviously negative. Thus, Bruce himself suggests that "Jesus was not thinking at all of fermented, intoxicating wine, but of 'must,' a non-intoxicating beverage, which could be kept safely in new leather bottles, but not in old skins which had previously contained ordinary wine, because particles of albuminoid matter adhering to the skin would set up fermentation and develop gas with an enormous pressure."33

Some argue that the "new wine" spoken of must have been "a new wine which had not fully fermented, but which had come so near the completion of that process that it could with safety be put into new skins, whose elasticity would be sufficient to resist the 'after-fermentation' which would ensue."34 The weakness of this hypothesis is twofold. First, wine which was near the completion of the process of fermentation could have safely been stored in old wineskins as well, because the neck opening would have provided an adequate release for the remaining fermenting gas. Second, the fermentation process, when permitted, was carried on not in wineskins, but in large jars, known as *habith* in Hebrew and *dolium* to the Romans.35

The only "new wine" which could be stored safesly in new wineskins was unfermented must, after it had been filtered or boiled. The skin would be prepared like the amphora, by smearing it with honey or pitch, and after the must was poured in, it would be tightly closed and sealed. The reason that a *new* skin was required for *ne*w wine is that an old skin would almost inevitably have, as Lees and Burns explain, "some of the decayed albuminous matter adhering to their sides."36 This would cause the new wine to ferment. On the other hand, if new wineskins were used to store unfermented new wine, no fermentation-causing agents would be present in the skins themselves. Thus, the

wine would be preserved from fermentation and the wineskins from rupture.

A Pagan Testimony. It is significant to note in this regard that Columella, the renowned Roman agriculturist who was a contemporary of the apostles, emphasizes the need to use a *new amphora* to preserve fresh must unfermented: "That must may remain always sweet as though it were fresh, do as follows. Before the grape-skins are put under the press, take from the vat some of the freshest possible must and put it in a *new wine-jar* [*amphoram novam*], then daub it over and cover it carefully with pitch, that thus no water may be able to get in. Then sink the whole flagon in a pool of cold, fresh water so that no part of it is above the surface. Then after forty days take it out of the water. The must will then keep sweet for as much as a year."37

A similar method was used with new wineskins, which were prepared, like the amphora, by being smeared with honey and pitch, and after being filled with must, were sealed and buried in the earth. Any of the processes described in the previous chapter, such as filtration, boiling, exclusion of air, sulphur fumigation, and reduction of the temperature below 40º F. (4º Celsius), would have been counted on to ensure the preservation of the new wine unfermented in new wineskins. Any two or all of these methods could be combined to ensure the prevention of fermentation.

The Meaning of the Saying. This interpretation is further confirmed by the symbolic meaning of Christ's saying. The imagery of new wine in new wineskins is an object lesson in regeneration. As fittingly explained by Ernest Gordon, "The old wineskins, with their alcoholic lees, represented the Pharisees' corrupt nature. The new wine of the Gospel could not be put into them. They would ferment it. 'I came not to call the self-righteous but repentant sinners.' The latter by their conversion become new vessels, able to retain the new wine without spoiling it (Mark 2:15-17, 22). So, by comparing intoxicating wine with degenerate Pharisaism, Christ clearly intimated what his opinion of intoxicating wine was."38

"It is well to notice," Ernest Gordon continues, "how in this

casual illustration, he [Christ] identifies wine altogether with unfermented wine. Fermented wine is given no recognition. It could be put into any kind of wineskin, however sorry and corrupt. But new wine is like new cloth which is too good to be used in patching rags. It is a thing clean and wholesome, demanding a clean container. The natural way in which this illustration is used suggests at least a general, matter-of-fact understanding among his Jewish hearers that the real fruit of the vine, the good wine, was unfermented."39

PART III: IS OLD WINE IS BETTER?

Importance of the Saying. In Luke Christ's saying about new wine in fresh wineskins is followed by a similar and yet different statement: "And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'The old is good'" (Luke 5:39). Though this statement is not found in the other Gospels, it forms an integral part of the narrative. Moderationists attach fundamental importance to this statement because it contains, in their view, Christ's outspoken commendation of alcoholic wine. Kenneth L. Gentry, for example, speaks of "the well-nigh universal prevalence of men to prefer old (fermented) wine over new (pre- or unfermented) wine. The Lord himself makes reference to this assessment among men in Luke 5:39: 'And no one, after drinking old wine, wishes for new; for he says, The old is good enough.'"40

Everett Tilson sees Luke 5:39 as one of the most challenging texts against those who favor abstinence. He writes: "This attempt to defend Jesus' preference for the 'new' [unfermented] to the 'old' [fermented] wine falls victim to the passage in Luke 5:39, long one of the most difficult passages for biblical literalists who favor abstinence. Without a word of criticism, as if expressing a truism with which he himself agrees, Luke records Jesus as saying: 'And no one after drinking old wine desires new.' Why? 'The old is good,' he answers (5:39)—though far more likely to be both fermented and intoxicating!"41

Meaning of "New Wine." The first question to address in our study of this passage is whether the "new wine" here has the same meaning as in the two preceding verses. Some think it does not. They see the "new wine" of verse

38 as being wine not fully fermented and that of verse 39 as fully fermented wine but without the mellowness which comes with age. Lees and Burns, the authors of *The Temperance Bible-Commentary*, favor the view that the "new wine" of verse 38 is "identical in nature, and representative of the same Christian blessings, with the 'old wine' of verse 39—being the new *preserved* and *improved* by age."42

The meaning of "new wine" in this passage cannot be determined by its general usage in Scripture because in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the phrase *oinos neo*s—"new wine" is used to translate both fermented wine as in Job 32:19 and unfermented grape juice as in Isaiah 49:26. In the latter it translates the Hebrew *asis* which designates unfermented grape juice.

In the passage under consideration it is legitimate to infer that "new wine" has the same meaning in the whole passage, because it is used consecutively without any intimation of change of meaning. The metaphors in both sayings are used without confusion or contradiction. This means that if the "new wine" of verse 38 is, as shown earlier, unfermented grape juice, the same must be true of the "new wine" of verse 39.

Meaning of "Old Wine." Before discussing whether or not Christ expressed a judgment on the superior quality of "old wine" over "new wine," it is important to determine whether the "old wine" spoken of is fermented or unfermented. From the viewpoint of quality, age "improves" the flavor not only of fermented wine but also of unfermented grape juice. Though no chemical change occurs, grape juice acquires a finer flavor by being kept, as its fine and subtle particles separate from the albuminous matter and other sedimentations. Thus, the "old wine" esteemed good could refer to grape juice preserved and improved by age.

The context, however, favors the meaning of fermented wine, since Christ uses the metaphor of the "old wine" to represent the old forms of religion and the "new wine" the new form of religious life He taught and inaugurated. In this

context, fermented old wine better represents the corrupted forms of the old Pharisaic religion.

Is "Old Wine" Better? In the light of this conclusion, it remains to be determined if Christ by this saying is expressing a value judgment on the superiority of "old [fermented] wine" over "new wine." A careful reading of the text indicates that the one who says "The old is good" is not Christ but anyone who has been drinking "old wine." In other words, Christ is not uttering His own opinion, but the opinion of those who have acquired a taste for the old wine. He says simply that anyone who has acquired a taste for old wine does not care for new. We know this to be the case. Drinking alcoholic beverages begets an appetite for stimulants and not for alcohol-free juices.

Christ’s saying does not represent His judgment regarding the superiority of old, fermented wine. Several commentators emphasize this point. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, Norval Geldenhuys says: "The point at issue here has nothing to do with the comparative merits of old and new wine, but refers to the predilection for old wine in the case of those who are accustomed to drink it."43

The same point is emphasized by Henry Alford in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke. He says: "Observe that there is *no objective comparison whatever* here between old and new wine; the whole stress is on *desireth* and *for he saith*, and the import of *better* is *subjective*: in the view of him who utters it."44 R. C. H. Lenski states the same truth most concisely: "It is not Jesus who calls the old wine ‘good enough,’ but he that drank it. A lot of old wine is decidedly bad because it has not been prepared properly; age is one thing, excellence with age quite another."45

In a similar vein, Dr. Jack Van Impe writes: "Does not Jesus say [in Luke 5:39] that old wine is better? Not at all. He simply says that one *who has been drinking* old wine says it is better. This shows the Lord’s understanding of the habit-forming effect of beverage alcohol. His statement stands true today. Try to sell grape juice on skid row and you will probably have no takers. Those who drink old wine (intoxicating wine) prefer it. They are hooked on it. . . . The

secondary message of the parable, then, actually argues for the superiority of new (unfermented) wine, using it as a picture of salvation."46

The Context of the "Old Wine." The view that old, fermented wine is better than new wine, would be false even if everyone on earth believed it! And in the passage we are considering is contradicted by the context in which it occurs and by the whole purpose of the illustration. In the immediate context Jesus uses the same word (*palaios*) of old garments, which He obviously did not esteem as better than new ones. The statement about "old wine" seems to contradict the preceding one about "old garment," but the contradiction disappears when one understands the purpose of the illustration.

In his article on *"oinos"* ("Wine") in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Heinrich Seeseman notes the apparent contradiction and the significance of the context: "Luke 5:39 seems to contradict what goes before, since it favors the retention of the old. In the context of Luke, however, it is regarded as a warning against over-estimation of the old."47

The purpose of the illustration is not to praise the superiority of old wine but to warn against an over-estimation of the old forms of religiosity promoted by the Pharisees. Such religiosity consisted, as verse 33 indicates, in the fulfillment of such external ascetic practices as frequent fasting and public prayer. To justify the fact that His disciples did not adhere to such external forms of religiosity, Christ used four illustrations: wedding guests do not fast in the presence of the bridegroom (vv. 34-35); new cloth is not used to patch an old garment (v. 36); new wine is not placed in old wineskins (vv. 37-38); new wine is not liked by those accustomed to drink the old (v. 39).

The common purpose of all the four illustrations is to help people accustomed to the old forms of religion, and unacquainted with the new form of religious life taught by Christ, to recognize that the old seems good only so long as one is not accustomed to the new, which in and of itself is better.

In this context, the old fermented wine seems good only to those who do not know the better new wine. In his book *Alcohol and the Bible*, Stephen Reynolds perceptively points out the broader implications of Christ's illustration about the old wine. He says: "Christ warns against the over-estimation of Pharisaism (old wine), but the figure of speech carries with it more than the thought that the Gospel should be regarded more highly than Pharisaism. It also strongly suggests that to those who are perceptive of truth, new wine (unfermented grape juice) is preferable to old (intoxicating) wine. Only the natural man with corrupted taste thinks otherwise."48

PART IV

WAS JESUS A GLUTTON AND A DRUNKARD?

Importance of the Text. More than nineteen centuries ago it was said of Jesus: "Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" (Matt 11:19; cf. Luke 7:34). A particular of this accusation has been repeated until today: Jesus was a drinking man! Lovers of alcoholic beverages love to affirm that Jesus was a drinking man in order to shelter themselves under the cover of His example.

The full text of this passage reads as follows: Jesus said: "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a glutton man, and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by all her children" (Luke 7:33-35).

Moderationists attach fundamental importance to this passage. Their reason is clear. They believe it offers an unmistakable proof that Jesus *used* alcoholic wine. While at the wedding of Cana Christ allegedly *made* fermented wine, and in His parables about the new wineskins and the old wine He *commended* alcoholic wine; in His description of His own lifestyle, He openly admitted to have *used* alcoholic wine.

Kenneth Gentry clearly states this argument, saying: "*Jesus himself drank wine*. As a matter of fact, in Luke 7:33-35 he makes reference to his practice of drinking wine as a vivid illustration of a distinctive difference between himself and his forerunner, John the Baptist."49

Horace Bumstead expresses the same opinion even more emphatically, saying: "The Bible sanctions the use of wine by the example of Christ. This sanction is undeniable and emphatic. Undeniable because we have the statement of fact in Christ's own words; emphatic because his example as a user of wine is expressly contrasted by himself with the example of his forerunner, John the Baptist, who, being a Nazarite, was an abstainer from wine."50

Irving Raymond views Christ's contrast to John as a "direct evidence" of His drinking habits. He writes: "Jesus Christ undoubtedly followed the usual customs of His day and drank wine at daily meals and at different kinds of celebrations. For proof of his assertion there is direct evidence both from what others said of Him and from what He Himself actually did. In contrast to St. John the Baptist, 'The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber.'"51 This reference constitutes for Raymond "sufficient grounds . . . to assert that not only did Jesus Christ Himself use and sanction the use of wine but also that He saw nothing intrinsically evil in wine."52

Two Different Lifestyles. The reasoning that "John drank no wine, while Christ did, therefore we may drink" ignores several crucial considerations. First of all, the phrase "eating and drinking" is used idiomatically to describe not so much the difference in their eating and drinking habits, as the difference in their social lifestyles.

Christ's lifestyle was eminently social; therefore, in the common parlance of that time, He came "eating and drinking," even though He was dependent for food and drink upon the gracious hospitality of friends. John's lifestyle was fundamentally eremitic—away from society in the solitude of the wilderness; therefore, in common parlance, he came "neither eating bread nor drinking wine"(NIV). The two phrases serve to emphasize the

wine" (NIV). The two phrases serve to emphasize the contrast between John's lifestyle of full *social isolation* and Christ's lifestyle of free *social association*. The emphasis is not on alcohol but on social lifestyle.

Ernest Gordon accurately describes the contrast implied by Christ's statement, saying: "It contrasts the isolation of John's life with the social character of Christ's. John was a wilderness prophet. He neither ate nor drank *with others* and avoided human companionship. Into the wilderness were driven the insane and devil-possessed. Hence the suggestion that he himself was of this class. Our Lord associated freely with others at meals and elsewhere. He too was slandered, called a glutton, and charged with being *oinopotes, a drinker* of (intoxicating) wine. There is no proof that he was either."53

Two Different Missions. The difference in lifestyle between Jesus and John is indicative of their different missions. John was called to prepare the way for Christ's ministry by preaching a message of repentance and reformation. In order to fulfill this mission he was called to rebuke the excesses of his time by living an abstemious life in the wilderness, away from the haunts of people. Jesus was anointed to another mission, which included proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom. In order to fulfill this mission Jesus did not withdraw into the wilderness, but reached the people in their homes, towns and villages.

As the austerity of John's lifestyle led his slanderers to charge him with being demon-possessed, so the sociability of Jesus' lifestyle led the same critics to charge Him with indulgence in sensuous delights, with being "a glutton and a drunkard." Both charges were groundless, because both Jesus and John lived exemplary lives of self-denial. They followed different lifestyles because they had their different mission.

John, a Nazirite. An important reason for Jesus' saying of John the Baptist that he came "drinking no wine" (Luke 7:33), is the fact that John was a Nazirite from his mother's womb. This is the way most commentators interpret Luke 1:15, where the angel instructs Zechariah regarding John, saying: "He shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will

saying: "He shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." Nazirites were people who showed their total consecration to God by abstaining not only from "wine and strong drink" but also from grape juice and grapes (Num 6:1-4).

Jesus, not being a Nazirite, was not under the obligation to abstain from drinking grape juice, made from the fruit of the vine. We know He drank at the Last Supper. It is not necessary to assume that because Jesus, contrary to John, "came drinking," that He drank *all* kinds of wine, both fermented and unfermented. If that were true for drinking, the same would be true for eating. Yet, no one is arguing that Jesus ate all kinds of food, both good and bad, clean and unclean.

Of whatever food or drink the Lord consumed, it was healthful designed to provide for His physical needs and not to gratify self-indulgence. "My food," Jesus said, "is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34). It is hard to believe that Jesus would have fulfilled His Father's will by partaking of intoxicating wine which the Scripture clearly condemns. Thus, it is unwarranted to assume that the kind of food and drink Jesus consumed was calculated to gratify an intemperate appetite robbing Him of clear mental perception and spiritual affection.

No Mention of "Wine." Another significant point often overlooked is that Jesus did not mention "wine" in describing His own lifestyle. While of John the Baptist Jesus said that he came "eating no bread and drinking no *wine*," of Himself He simply said: "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking." Some argue that the antithetic parallelism, in which the thought of the first statement is contrasted with the opposite in the second statement, "demands that 'wine' be understood to be assumed in the second part of the statement."54

The argument seems plausible but the fact remains that if Jesus had wanted it known that, contrary to John the Baptist He was a wine-drinker, then He could have repeated the word "wine" for the sake of emphasis and clarity. By refusing to specify what kinds of food or drink

clarity. By refusing to specify what kinds of food or drink He consumed, Christ may well have wished to deprive His critics of any basis for their charge of gluttony and drunkenness. The omission of "bread" and "wine" in the second statement (Matthew omits them in both statements) could well have been intended to expose the senselessness of the charge. In other words, Jesus appears to have said, "My critics accuse me of being a glutton and drunkard, just because I do not take meals alone but eat often in the presence of other people. I eat *socially*. But my critics actually do not know *what* I eat."

Drunk with Grape Juice? Some argue, "Were it the case that Jesus did *not* drink wine, how could it be alleged that he was a drunkard?"55 The assumption is that Christ could have never been accused of being a drunkard unless He drank alcoholic wine, for the simple reason that grape juice does not make a person drunk.

The weakness of this assumption is its failure to realize that the charge is a lie, based not on factual observations but on a fiction fabricated by unscrupulous critics. Assuming that His critics actually saw Jesus drinking something, they would have readily accused Him of being a drunkard, even if they saw Him drinking grape juice, or water, for that matter. On the day of Pentecost, as we shall see in Chapter 6, critics charged the apostles with being drunk on grape-juice (*gleukos*—Acts 2:13). This goes to show that no matter what Jesus drank, His unscrupulous critics would have maligned Him as a drunkard.

Critics’ Charge. To infer that Jesus must have drunk wine because His critics accused Him of being a "drunkard" means to accept as truth the word of Christ’s enemies. On two other occasions his critics accused Jesus, saying: "You have a demon" (John 7:20; 8:48). If we believe that Christ must have drunk some alcoholic wine because His critics accused Him of being a drunkard, then we must also believe that He had an evil spirit because His critics accused Him of having a demon. The absurdity of such reasoning shows that using critics’ accusations is not safe grounds for defining Biblical teachings.

Jesus answered the baseless charge of His critics, saying: "Yet wisdom is justified by all her children" (Luke 7:35).

"Yet wisdom is justified by all her children" (Luke 7:35). Textual evidence is divided between "children" and "works," but the meaning of this cryptic statement remains the same, namely, that wisdom is to be judged by its results. The wisdom of God is vindicated by the works of goodness to which it gives birth. Thus, to infer that Jesus drank wine because of the aspersions of His critics shows a complete lack of wisdom. The results of His life of self-denial speak for themselves.

PART V: THE COMMUNION WINE

Importance of the Episode. Christ's use of "wine" at the Last Supper to represent His redeeming blood (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24) is seen by moderationists as the clinching proof of the Lord's approval of its use. Horace Bumstead expresses this conviction emphatically, saying: "To secure the permanence of his example in regard to [alcoholic] wine even to the remotest parts of the earth and to the latest periods of history, he [Christ] chooses wine for one of the elements to be employed in his memorial feast throughout all lands and during all ages."56

Fundamental importance is attached to the "wine" of the Last Supper because Christ not only used it, but even *commanded it to be used until the end of time.* The sequence in which the "wine" episodes have been examined in this chapter reflects somehow the order of importance attributed to them by moderationists. They claim that at the wedding of Cana Christ *made* alcoholic wine; in the parables of the new wineskins and of the old wine, He *commended* alcoholic wine; in His description of His lifestyle ("eating and drinking") He admitted having *used* alcoholic wine; and in the account of the *Last Supper*, He *commanded* alcoholic wine to be used until the end of time.

The first three claims have already been examined and found unwarranted. It remains now to examine the last. This we shall do by looking at two major arguments.

1. Is the "Fruit of the Vine" Alcoholic Wine?

"Fruit of the Vine." After offering the cup to His disciples

as the symbol of His blood of the new covenant, Jesus said: "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt 26:29; cf. Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). Moderationists maintain that the phrase "fruit of the vine" is a figurative expression which was used as "a functional equivalent for [fermented] 'wine.'"57 Consequently the cup Jesus offered to the disciples contained alcoholic wine.

It is true that the phrase "fruit of the vine" was *sometimes* used as equivalent to *oinos* (wine), but that does not mean that the wine used at the Last Supper must have been fermented. We have shown in Chapter 2 that *oinos,* like the Hebrew *yayin,* was a generic term for the expressed juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, uses *oinos* to translate *yayin* and *tirosh* in such passages as Jeremiah 40:10-11 and Judges 9:13, where the idea of fermentation *is excluded.*

Josephus' Testimony. More important still is the fact that the phrase "fruit of the vine" *was used to designate fresh, unfermented grape juice.* A clear example is provided by the Jewish historian, Josephus, who was a contemporary of the apostles. Writing about the dream of Pharaoh's cupbearer who had been imprisoned with Joseph, he says: "He therefore said that in his sleep he saw three clusters of grapes hanging upon three branches of a vine . . . and that he squeezed them into a cup which the king held in his hands; and when he had strained the wine, he gave it to the king to drink."58 In interpreting the dream, Joseph told the cupbearer to "to expect to be loosed from his bonds in three days' time, because the king desired his service, and was about to restore him to it again; for he let him know that God bestows *the fruit of the vine* upon men for good; which wine is poured out to him and is a pledge of fidelity and mutual confidence among men."59

Two things are significant about this passage. First, Josephus calls the juice that was squeezed from the three clusters of grapes (*gleukos),* which William Whiston translated as "wine," because at the time of his translation, namely in 1737, "wine" meant grape juice, whether fermented or unfermented. In this case the context clearly

fermented or unfermented. In this case the context clearly indicates that *gleukos* was freshly squeezed grape-juice. Second, Josephus explicitly calls the freshly squeezed grape-juice "the fruit of the vine" (*gennema tes ampelou*). *This establishes beyond a shadow of a doubt that the phrase "fruit of the vine" was used to designate the sweet, unfermented juice of the grape.*

Considering how often the New Testament writers mention the Last Supper, their entire avoidance of the term *oinos* (wine) in its connection is remarkable. The two terms used instead are "the cup" and "the fruit of the vine." The consistent avoidance of the term "wine," especially by Paul in his extended description of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), suggests that they may have wished to distinguish the content of the cup from what was commonly known as fermented wine.

Natural Produce. Christ calls the content of the cup "the fruit of the vine" (*gennema tes ampelou*). The noun *gennema* (fruit) derives from the verb *gennao*, to beget or produce, and signifies that which is produced in a natural state, just as it is gathered. In Luke 12:18, for example, the rich man who had a plentiful harvest says: "I will pull down my barns and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain (*ta gennemata* "produce") and my goods." The basic meaning of *gennema*, as this and other examples in the Septuagint (Gen 41:34; 47:24; Ex 23:10) indicate, is the natural fruit or produce of the earth.

In our particular case it can best apply to grape juice as the natural produce of the grapes, which are "the fruit of the vine." Josephus, as we have just seen, offers us a clear example of this meaning. Fermented wine is not the natural "fruit of the vine" but the unnatural fruit of fermentation and disintegration. To apply the phrase "the fruit of the vine" to alcoholic wine which is the product of fermentation and decay, as Frederic Lees puts it, "is just the same absurdity as to call death the fruit of life."[60] It is also absurd to imagine that the "fruit of the vine" that Christ promised to drink again with His followers in the Kingdom, will be fermented wine. We have reasons to hope that the new earth will be free from intoxicating substances.

It seems that in His divine wisdom Christ chose to

It seems that in His divine wisdom Christ chose to designate the content of the cup, the memorial of His redeeming blood, "the fruit of the vine" so that future generations of Christians would find no sanction in His words for using alcoholic wine at the Lord’s Supper.

It is noteworthy that the word "vine" is used on only on two occasions in the Gospels, and both are in the context of the Last Supper: the first time occurs in the account of the celebration of the Last Supper, as just noted, and the second in Christ’s parting counsel to His disciples following the Supper (John 15:1, 4, 5). In the latter instance, Jesus represents Himself as the genuine living vine and His disciples as the branches dependent upon Him for spiritual life and fruitfulness. The sequence suggests that after Jesus offered to His disciples the natural "fruit of the vine" as the memorial of His redeeming blood, He presented Himself to them as the "living vine" to encourage His disciples to abide in Him as the branches abide in the vine, so that they also, who had just partaken of "the fruit of the vine," might bear "much fruit" (John 15:5). The "fruit" in both instances is a fresh, natural product which can hardly be identified with fermented wine.

2. Was the Passover Wine Alcoholic?

Jewish Practice. A second major argument used to defend the alcoholic nature of the wine contained in the "cup" of the Last Supper, is the alleged prevailing Jewish custom of using fermented wine at Passover. As Everett Tilson puts it, "If the Jews of Jesus’ time knew of the prohibition of ordinary wine during this period, it seems strange that the Mishnah in its six thousand words of directions for the observance of the Passover should contain no allusion whatever to it."61

This argument deserves serious consideration because if it is really true that at the time of Christ, the Jews used only fermented wine for the customary four cups drunk during the Passover meal, it would be possible though not inevitable, that Jesus used fermented wine was used during the Last Supper.

We must never forget that Christ’s teachings and practices were not necessarily conditioned by prevailing customs

were not necessarily conditioned by prevailing customs. Jesus often acted contrary to prevailing religious customs of fasting, hand-washing, and burdensome Sabbathkeeping. In fact, His independent spirit is revealed in the very institution of the Lord’s Supper. He offered to His disciples the symbolic cup only once, instead of the customary four times, and He used only the bread as the symbol of His body, leaving out the roasted lamb and the bitter herbs as symbols of the ordinance. Thus, it would not have been surprising if Christ had acted contrary to prevailing custom by using unfermented grape juice, especially since He viewed leaven or fermentation as the symbol of moral corruption (Matt 16:6, 12).

No Preference Given to Fermented Wine. But Jesus may not have needed to act against a prevailing custom. There are indications that there was no uniformity in the use of Passover wine by the Jews. Such absence of uniformity is present among modern Jews as well. Louis Ginzberg (1873-1941), a distinguished Talmudic scholar who for almost forty years was chairman of the Talmudic and Rabbinic Department at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, provides what is perhaps the most exhaustive analysis of the Talmudic references regarding the use of wine in Jewish religious ceremonies. He concludes his investigation, by saying: "We have thus proven on the basis of the main passages both of the Babylonian Talmud and that of Jerusalem that unfermented wine may be used *lekatehillah* [optionally] for *Kiddush* [the consecration of a festival by means of a cup of wine] and other religious ceremonies outside the temple. In the temple its use is sanctioned only *bediabad* [after the act]. Indeed, in no way is fermented wine to be given any preference over unfermented in the ceremonies outside the temple. Raba summarizes the law well in the statement: ‘One may press the juice of grapes and immediately recite the *kiddush* over it.’"62

After examining the views of two Jewish codes regarding the use of fermented wine in Jewish religious ceremonies, Ginzberg again concludes: "It is thus seen that according to the views of the two most generally accepted Jewish codes, the *Tur* and the *Shulham ‘Aruk*, no precedence whatever is given to fermented over unfermented wines. It is not even *mitzvah min ha-mubhar* [a priority

is not even *mitzvah min ha-mubhar* [a priority commandment] to use fermented wines."63

Ginberg's conclusion is confirmed by *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. In its article on "Jesus" it says: "According to the synoptic Gospels, it would appear that on the Thursday evening of the last week of his life Jesus with his disciples entered Jerusalem in order to eat the Passover meal with them in the sacred city; if so, the wafer and the wine of the mass or the communion service then instituted by him as a memorial would be the unleavened bread and *the unfermented wine of the Seder service* (see Bickell, *Messe und Pascha*, Leipsic, 1872)."64

John Kitto's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* also refers to the use of unfermented wine at the Passover meal: "The wine used would of course be unfermented, but it is not certain that it was always the fresh expressed juice or 'pure blood of the grape' (Deut 32:14); for the Mishnah states that the Jews were in the habit of using *boiled wine.* 'They do not boil the wine of the heave-offering, *because it diminishes it*,' and consequently thickens it, thus rendering the mingling of water with it when drunk necessary; but it is immediately added, 'Rabbi Yehudah permits this, *because it improves it*' (*Teroomoth Perek*, c. xi)."65

A Rabbinical Fabrication. Testimonies such as these clearly discredit the claim that only fermented wine was used at the time of Christ during the Passover meal. It would appear that unfermented wine was also used at Passover. The references to fermented wine, according to Lees and Burns, are not found in the text of the *Mishnah* itself—a collection of Jewish expositions and customs compiled about A.D. 200 by Rabbi Yehuda—but in later annotations of the Talmud: "The Talmud was copiously annotated by Maimonides and Bartenora, celebrated rabbins of the Middle Ages; and it is from their notes, and not from the text of the Mishnah, that references to the intoxicating nature of Passover wine have been extracted."66

The Mishnah expressly specifies that the search for ferment on the night of the Passover extended to the cellars where all the fermented beverages made from

grain were to be excluded. These included the *cutakh* of Babylon, the *sheker* of the Medes, and the *hamets* of Idumea. Maimonides and Bartenora, distinguished Spanish rabbis of the twelfth century, in their comments on the Mishnah, argue that the prohibition of fermented drinks applies only to liquors made from grain, but not to those made from fruits. The reason given by Maimonides is that "the liquor of fruit does not engender fermentation, but acidity."67

It is hard to imagine that some rabbis could believe in good faith that fruit beverages such as wine do not ferment. One wonders whether such an imaginative argument was not fabricated to legitimize the use of alcoholic wine. If that were true, it would only serve to show that Rabbis understood that the law of the Passover prohibiting the use of any "fermented thing" (Ex 13:7) during the seven days of the feast, extended also to fermented wine.

Later Testimonies. There is much evidence that among the Jews the custom of using unfermented wine at Passover has survived through the centuries. The *Arba Turi*m, a digest of Talmudic law compiled in the thirteenth century by Rabbi Jacob ben Asher, says of the four Passover cups: "If needful, he must sell what he has, in order to keep the injunction of the wise men. Let him sell what he has, until he procures *yayin or zimmoogim*—wine or raisins."68 Raisins were used to make Passover wine by boiling chopped raisins in water and then straining their juice. The learned Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel, in his book *Vindicia Judaeorum* (*The Claims of the Jews,* published in Amsterdam, 1656), says of the Passover: "Here, at this feast, every confection [*matzoth*] ought to be so pure as not to admit of any *ferment* or of anything that will readily *fermentate*."69

In his book on *Modern Judaism*, published in 1830, J. Allen writes regarding the Passover wine: "They [the Jews] are forbidden to drink any liquor made from grain, or *that has passed through the process of* fermentation. Their drink is either pure water or raisin-wine prepared by themselves."70

Rabbi S. M. Isaac, an eminent nineteenth-century rabbi and editor of *The Jewish Messenger*, says: "The Jews do not, in their feasts for sacred purposes, *including the marriage feast*, ever use any kind of fermented drinks. In their oblations and libations, both private and public, they employ the fruit of the vine—that is, fresh grapes—unfermented grape-juice, and raisins, as the symbol of benediction. Fermentation is to them always a symbol of corruption."71

Rabbi Isaac's statement is not quite accurate; Jewish sources are not unanimous on the kind of wine to be used at Passover. The eighth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1895) explains the reason for the conflicting views: "Wine also to the quantity of four or five cups was drunk by each person. Considerable dispute has been raised as to whether the wine used on this occasion was fermented or unfermented,—was the ordinary wine, in short, or the pure juice of the grape. Those who hold it was unfermented appeal mainly to the expression 'unfermented things,' which is the true rendering of the word translated 'unleavened bread.' The rabbins would seem to have interpreted the command respecting ferment as extending to the wine as well as to the bread of the passover. The modern Jews, accordingly, generally use raisin wine, after the injunction of the rabbins."72

The last statement is not quite correct either, for we have seen not all rabbis extended the law of "unfermented things' to the wine. The two different interpretations of the Mosaic law regarding "unfermented things" (Ex 13:7) are indicative of different religious traditions among the Jews. The Orthodox Jews, who are conservative, use mostly unfermented wine, while the Reformed Jews, who are liberal, use mostly fermented wine.

In the introduction to his compilation of Talmudic statements regarding wine and strong drink, Rabbi Isidore Koplowitz, an Orthodox Jew, says: "The four cups of wine used at the Seder table (the table set in order with Passover symbols in accordance with the ritual), on Passover night, at the home service are not ordained in the Jewish Bible. Moses, the Prophets in Israel and the Men of the Great Synod have never prescribed or

Men of the Great Synod have never prescribed or commanded the drinking of wine or any other intoxicating liquors at any religious function whatever. This custom is but a Rabbinic institution.

"Yet, the greatest Rabbinic authority in orthodox Israel of today, namely, the ‘Shulchan Aruch,’ clearly and distinctly permits the use of ‘boiled wine’ (raisins boiled in water), for the four cups of wine at the Seder table.

"It is permissible to recite the prescribed *Kiddush* (sanctification), on Passover night, over boiled wine and over wine mixed with honey. (*Shulchun Aruch Druch Chayim* Cup 273, parag. 9)."73

Our sampling of both ancient and modern Jewish testimonies, should suffice to discredit the claim that only fermented wine was used at the time of Christ during the Passover meal. The Jews differed in their practice of this matter as they were influenced by two different rabbinical interpretations of the Mosaic prescription regarding the exclusion of "fermented things" from their dwellings during Passover.

Our ultimate concern is to determine not the Jewish custom but the conduct of Christ. On this, as we shall see, there can be no controversy. Christ would not have ignored the law regarding fermentation (Ex 13:6-7) by celebrating Passover with fermented wine, which could not have served fittingly to represent His incorruptible life-giving blood.

3. Jesus Used the *Un*fermented "Fruit of the Vine"

The foregoing discussion has dealt with two of the major arguments advanced in favor of the fermented nature of Passover wine. Another important argument, namely, the alleged exclusive use of fermented wine for the Lord’s Supper during Christian history will be examined later in this chapter. At this point I wish to present four major reasons for supporting the Saviour’s use of the *un*fermented "fruit of the vine" at the Last Supper.

Obedience to the Mosaic Law. Jesus used unfermented

grape juice at the Last Supper because He understood and observed the Mosaic law requiring the absence of all fermented articles during the Passover feast. The law forbade the use and presence in the house of *seor* (Ex 12:15), which means leaven, yeast or whatever can produce fermentation. As Leon C. Field explains, "It means literally 'the sourer,' and is applicable to any matter capable of producing fermentation—to all yeastly or decaying albuminous substances—and so may be translated 'ferment.'"74

Whatever had been subject to the action of *seor*—that is fermentation, was also forbidden. This was called *hametz* and is translated "leavened bread" in the KJV (Ex 12:15; 13:7). The word "bread," however, is not in the text; thus a more accurate translation is "fermented thing." For seven days the Jews were to partake of *matzoth*, usually translated "unleavened bread" (Ex 13:6-7). As in the case of *hametz*, the word "bread" is not in the text, thus, a more accurate translation is "unfermented things."

This translation is confirmed by Robert Young, author of *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible.* In his *Young's Literal Translation of the Bible,* Young renders Exodus 12:14, 19 as follows: ". . . for anyone eating anything fermented from the first day till the seventh day, even that person hath been cut off from Israel. . . . anything fermented ye do not eat, in all your dwellings ye do not eat leavened things." Thus the entire passage of Exodus 13:6-7 may with literal accuracy be rendered: "Seven days you shall eat of unfermented things, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. Unfermented things shall be eaten for seven days; no fermented thing shall be seen with you in all your territory."

Compliance with the Mosaic law would require the exclusion of fermented wine. The rabbis debated this question at great length and, as we have seen, some circumvented the law by arguing that the juice of fruits, such as wine, do not ferment. There is no reason to believe that Jesus, who had come to fulfill the law (Matt 5:17), would violate the Passover law against the use of "fermented things," especially since He recognized and affirmed the moral symbolism of fermentation when He

warned His disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Phariseesand Sadducees" (Matt 16:6). "Leaven" for Christ represented corrupt nature and teachings, as the disciples later understood (Matt 16:12).

Paul gives to "leaven" the same symbolic meaning when he admonishes the Corinthians to "cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:7-8).

The exclusion of fermented things during the Passover feast was *not* merely to remind the Israelites of the haste with which they left Egypt (Deut 16:3), having no time to put leaven in their dough. This is evident from Exodus 12:8, 39 where the command to eat unleavened bread was given before the departure from Egypt, when there was plenty of time for the dough to rise.

The primary purpose of the law against leaven is found in the symbolic meaning Scripture attaches to leaven which, as we have seen, is sin and corruption. Ellen White brings out this purpose of the law, saying: "Among the Jews, leaven was sometimes used as an emblem of sin. At the time of the Passover the people were directed to remove all the leaven from their houses, as they were to put away sin from their hearts."75 If ferment, the symbol of corruption and insincerity, was out of place at the Jewish Passover, how much more unsuitable it should be at the Christian Lord's Supper!

The symbolic, moral significance attached to leaven is further indicated by its exclusion from the cereal offering (Lev 2:11), the sin offering (Lev 6:17), the consecration offering (Ex 29:2), the Nazarite offering (Num 6:15) and the showbread (Lev 24:5-9). But salt, because it represents preservation from corruption, was required with sacrifices: "With all your offerings you shall offer salt" (Lev 2:13). If leaven was not allowed with the sacrifices, which were a type of Christ's atoning blood, how much more out of place would been fermented wine to represent His atoning blood!

Jesus understood the meaning of the letter and spirit of the Mosaic law regarding "unfermented things," as indicated by His teaching (Matt 16:6, 12). This gives us reason to believe that the cup He "blessed" and gave to His disciples did not contain any "fermented thing" prohibited by Scripture. We cannot imagine that our Lord disregarded a Biblical command by choosing fermented wine to perpetuate the memory of His sacrifice, of which all the other sacrifices were but types.

Consistency of Symbol. A second reason for believing that Jesus used unfermented wine at the Last Supper is the consistency and beauty of the blood symbolism which cannot be fittingly represented by fermented wine. Leaven, we have seen, was used by Christ to represent the corrupt teachings of the Pharisees and is viewed in Scripture as an emblem of sin and corruption. Could Christ have offered His disciples a cup of fermented wine to symbolize His untainted blood shed for the remission of our sins? Could the redeeming and cleansing blood of Christ have been represented aptly by an intoxicating cup which stands in the Scripture for human depravity and divine indignation?

We cannot conceive that Christ bent over to bless in grateful prayer a cup containing alcoholic wine which the Scripture warns us not to look at (Prov 23:31). A cup that intoxicates is a cup of cursing and not "the cup of blessing" (1 Cor 10:16); it is "the cup of demons" and not "the cup of the Lord" (1 Cor 10:21).

Up to that moment the redeeming blood of Christ had been represented by the blood of goats and bulls (Heb 9:13-14); henceforth the new emblem was to be the wine of the Lord's Supper. The blood of Christ was free from defilement and corruption. There was no taint of sin in His veins. "He whom God raised up saw no corruption" (Acts 13:37) either in life or in death. To symbolize the purity of His blood (life) poured out for the remission of sin, Jesus took a cup and over its content, declared: "This is *my* blood" (Matt 26:28). The content of the cup could hardly have been fermented wine, because the latter cannot properly symbolize the incorruptible and precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet 1:18-19).

Christ" (1 Pet 1:18-19).

Fermented wine is an appropriate emblem for decay and death, for fermentation destroys most of the nutrients found in grape juice. On the other hand, unfermented grape juice, on account of its innocent and nutritious properties, is a proper symbol of the blessings of salvation and immortal life bestowed upon us through the blood of Christ. His blood is said to purify our "conscience from dead works" (Heb 9:14), but fermented wine weakens our moral inhibitions and awakens our baser passions, thus causing the defilement of our consciences. Can such a product properly represent the cleansing power of Christ's redeeming blood? Hardly so. It is more fitted to represent moral disease and guilt than pardon and purification.

The value of a symbol is determined by its capacity to help us conceptualize and experience the spiritual reality it represents. Grape juice untouched by fermentation supplies life-sustaining nutrients to our bodies, thus it has the capacity for helping us to conceptualize and to experience the assurance of salvation represented by Christ's blood. Ellen White aptly says: "The Passover wine, untouched by fermentation, is on the table. These emblems Christ employs to represent His own unblemished sacrifice. Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot'" (1 Pet 1:19).76

The Language of the Last Supper. A third reason for believing that Jesus used unfermented wine at the Last Supper is suggested by the language in which its institution is recorded. The words have been preserved with singular uniformity in the synoptic Gospels and almost in the same form in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. We will briefly consider three phrases of the narrative.

After blessing and breaking the bread Jesus "*took a cup*" (Matt 26:27; Mark 14:23; cf. Luke 22:17; 1 Cor 11:25). Most authorities suggest that the reference is to the third of the four cups of the Passover meal, called the "cup of benediction" (*Cos ha-Berachah*). This cup by which the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted retained its name as "the cup of blessing" (1 Cor 10:16). Evidently the name was derived from the blessing Christ

Evidently the name was derived from the blessing Christ pronounced over its contents. Such could never be the intoxicating wine of which God clearly disapproves in the Scripture. As mentioned earlier, we cannot imagine Christ bending over prayerfully to bless a cup containing intoxicating wine. The supposition is sacrilegious. Such cup would be a cup of cursing rather than a cup of blessing, "the cup of demons" rather than "the cup of the Lord" (1 Cor 10:21).

After blessing the cup, Jesus gave it to His disciples and said: "*Drink of it, all of you*" (Matt 26:27, cf. Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17). Christ's invitation to drink the memorial cup of His blood is extended to "*all*" without exception. There is no reason that anyone should refuse the cup, if its content is unfermented, nutritious grape juice. But if its content is fermented, intoxicating wine, many of Christ's faithful followers cannot and should not partake of it.

The cup Jesus offered to His disciples contained not just a sip of wine, as do today's communion cups, but about three-quarters of a pint of wine. According to the Talmud, each person at Passover was supplied with at least four cups of wine, and had permission to drink extra in between. Each cup, says J. B. Lightfoot, was to contain "not less than the fourth part of a quarter of a hin, besides what water was mingled with it."77 A hin contained twelve English pints, so the four cups would amount to three-quarters of a pint each.

Three pints of alcoholic wine is sufficient to make any person, except a heavy drinker, grossly intoxicated. This is apparently what happened to some of those who drank alcoholic wine at Passover. An example is its effect on Rabbi Judah. He drank no wine "except at religious ceremonies, such as . . . the Seder of Passover (four cups). The Seder wine affected him so seriously that he was compelled to keep his head swathed till the following feast-day—Pentecost."78

To imagine that Christ would sanction such ill-effects by personally offering a sizeable cup of alcoholic wine to His disciples, is tantamount to destroying the moral integrity of His character. Believers who truly accepts Christ as their sinless Saviour instinctively recoil from such a thought

sinless Saviour instinctively recoil from such a thought.

Christ commands "all" of His followers to drink the cup. If the content of the cup were alcoholic wine, not all Christians could drink. There are some to whom alcohol in any form is very harmful. Young children participate at the Lord's table should certaintly not touch wine. There are those to whom the simple taste or smell of alcohol awakens in them a dormant or conquered craving for alcohol. Could Christ, who taught us to pray "Lead us not into temptation," have made His memorial table a place of irresistible temptation for some and of danger for all?

This may be a reason that the Catholic Church eventually decided to deny the cup to the laity, limiting it to the clergy. Protestants strongly object to this practice and have restored to the people the visible symbol which for several centuries was withheld from them. Yet, they also for reasons of safety have limited the amount of wine to a mouthful. The quantity of wine in the tiny cups is so small that it must be sipped rather than supped. The wine of the Lord's Supper can never be taken *freely* and *festally* as long as it is alcoholic and intoxicating.

Another significant element of the language of the Last Supper is the phrase "*fruit of the vine*," used by Jesus to describe the content of the cup. We noticed earlier that this designation best applies to natural, unfermented juice. Fermented wine is not the natural "fruit" of the vine but is the result of disintegrating forces. Thus, the very designation used by Christ, "fruit of the vine" supports the unfermented nature of the wine used at the Last Supper.

The Survival of the Practice. A fourth reason for believing that Jesus used unfermented wine at the Last Supper is the survival of such a practice among certain Christian groups or churches. A significant example is the apocryphal *Acts and Martyrdom of St. Matthew the Apostle*, which circulated in the third century. A heavenly voice instructs the local Bishop Plato, saying: "Read the Gospel and bring as an offering the holy bread; and having pressed three clusters from the vine into a cup, communicate with me, as the Lord Jesus showed us how to offer up when He rose from the dead on the third day."[79] This is a clear testimony of the use of freshly

day." 79 This is a clear testimony of the use of freshly pressed grape juice in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

Another indication is provided by the view expressed by Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200), Bishop of Lyons, that the communion bread and wine are the first fruits offered to God: "Giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own created things . . . He [Christ] took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, ‘This is My body.’ And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood."80

The concept of "the first fruits" was applied not only to the bread and wine, but also to the actual grapes and grain offered on the altar. In his classic study *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Joseph Bingham explains that some of the Canons of the African Church prescribe that "no other first-fruits are allowed to be offered at the altar but only grapes and corn, as being the materials of bread and wine, out of which the eucharist was taken."81 In some places the custom developed of distributing the actual grapes and grain together with the bread and wine. To rectify this innovation, the Council of Trullo (A.D. 692) ordered to have "a distinct consecration, and a distinct distribution, if the people were desirous to eat their first-fruits in the church." 82 The identification of the communion bread and wine with the first-fruits and the consecration of grain and grapes as first-fruits distributed to the people together with bread and wine, indicates how the latter were perceived as the natural, unfermented produce of the land.

The practice of pressing preserved grapes directly into the communion cup is attested by the third Council of Braga (A.D. 675), which reports that Cyprian (died 258 A.D.) condemned those who "used no other wine but what they pressed out of the cluster of grapes that were then presented at the Lord’s table."83 Such a practice shows the concern of some Christians to obey Christ’s words by offering a genuine "fruit of the vine" made out of fresh or dried grapes presented and pressed at the Lord’s table.

Cyprian condemned not so much the use of freshly pressed wine (*expressum vinum*) but the failure to mix it

pressed wine (*expressum vinum)* but the failure to mix it with water. Apparently, the practice of mingling wine with water originated, as Leon C. Field points out, "not necessarily in the weakening of alcoholic wine, but in the thinning of boiled wines and the thick juices of the crushed grapes."84 Instructions in this regard had already been given three centuries before by Pope Julius I (A. D. 337) in a decree which says: "If necessary let the cluster be pressed into the cup and water mingled with it."85

Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225-1274) quotes and supports Julius' decree, because "must has already the species of wine [*speciem vinum*] . . . consequently this sacrament can be made from must."86 The same view is expressed by other Western theologians such as Jacobus a Vitriaco, Dionysius Bonsalibi, and Johannes Belethus.87 The latter speaks of the custom "well known in certain places" of celebrating the Lord's Supper, especially on August 6, Day of the Transfiguration, with new wine or freshly squeezed grape juice: "Let us notice that on this same day the blood of Christ is set forth from new wine, if it can be found, or from ripe grapes pressed into the cup."88

The use of unfermented wine is well documented, especially among Eastern Churches. Leon C. Field, G. W. Samson, Frederic Lees and Dawson Burns, provide valuable information in their respective studies about such churches as the Abyssinian Church, the Nestorian Church of Western Asia, the Christians of St. Thomas in India, the Coptic monasteries in Egypt, and the Christians of St. John in Persia, all of which celebrated the Lord's Supper with unfermented wine made either with fresh or dried grapes. 89 The reader is referred to these authors for documentation and information about these oriental churches.

Our inquiry into several aspects of the communion wine, such as the Jewish Passover wine, the language of the Last Supper, the Passover law of fermentation, the consistency of the symbol, and the survival of the use of unfermented grape juice at the Lord's Supper, has shown that all of these indicate our Lord used and commanded the use of unfermented, nutritious grape juice to perpetuate the memory of His blood shed for the remission of our sins.

remission of our sins.

CONCLUSION

We have examined at considerable length the major wine-related stories or sayings of Jesus that are commonly used to prove that our Savior *made*, *commended, used* and *commanded* the use of alcoholic wine until the end of time. We have found these claims to rest on unfounded assumptions, devoid of textual, contextual and historical support.

The "good wine" Jesus *made* at Canaan was "good" not because of its high alcoholic content but because it was fresh, unfermented grape-juice. The "new wine" Jesus *commended* through the parable of the new wineskins is unfermented must, either boiled or filtered, because not even new wineskins could withstand the pressure of the gas produced by fermenting new wine. Jesus' description of Himself as "eating and drinking" does *not* imply that He *used* alcoholic wine but that He associated with people freely at their meals and elsewhere. The "fruit of the vine" that Christ *commanded* to be used as a memorial of His redeeming blood was not fermented wine, which in the Scripture represents human depravity, corruption and divine indignation, but unfermented and pure grape juice, a fitting emblem of Christ's untainted blood shed for the remission of our sins.

The claim that Christ used and sanctioned the use of alcoholic beverages has been found to be unsubstantiated. The evidence we have submitted shows that Jesus abstained from all intoxicating substances and gave no sanction to His followers to use them.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V

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4. Ibid., p. 54; see also Howard H. Charles, *Alcohol and the Bible* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1981), p. 19.

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6. William Hendricksen, *New Testament Commentary: John* (Grand Rapids, 1973), p. 115.

7. Kenneth L. Gentry (n. 1), p. 52.

8. For example, Howard H. Charles says: "Even though we may wish it otherwise, honest exegesis compels the candid admission that on this occasion Jesus deliberately added to the stock of wine available for consumption at the wedding feast" (n. 4), p. 19.

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24. See, for example, John Charles Ellicot, ed., *The Four Gospels* in *Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, 1954), vol. 6, p. 394; William Barclay, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia, 1956), p. 84; Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (Nashville, n. d.), vol. 5, p. 527; G. H. MacGregor, *The Gospel of John* (London, 1953), p. 53.

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30. Jimmy L. Albright, "Wine in the Biblical World: Its Economic, Social, and Religious Implications for New Testament Interpretation" (Ph. D. Dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980), pp. 129, 137.

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34. Horace Bumstead, "The Biblical Sanction for Wine," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 38 (January 1881): 82.

35. See *Encyclopedia Biblica* (n.32), p. 5315; also William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, s. v. "*Vinum*." For a description of the storage of large jars after the first fermentation, see James B. Pritchard, *Gibeon:Where the Sun Stood Still* (Princeton, 1962), pp.90-98.

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40. Kenneth L. Gentry (n. 1), p. 54.

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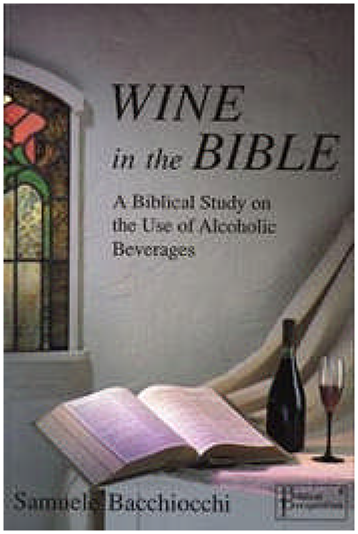
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WINE IN THE BIBLE: A BIBLICAL STUDY ON THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Chapter 6

WINE IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

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Fundamental importance is attached to the teachings and practices of the Apostolic Church because, as the mother church of Christendom, she serves as a model for Christians and Christian churches in general. The sixteenth-century reformation movements, for example, aimed at reforming the church by recovering what they perceived to be the teachings and practices of the Apostolic Church.

The importance of the Apostolic Church extends to her teachings regarding the use of alcoholic beverages. The way the apostles understood, preached and practiced the teachings of Jesus and of the Old Testament regarding alcoholic beverages serves not only to validate the conclusions we have reached so far, but also to clarify whether we as Christians today should take our stand on the side of moderation or on the side of abstinence.

Objective and Procedure. This chapter examines the apostolic teaching regarding the use of wine in particular and of intoxicating substances in general. The specific references to "wine"(*oinos*) outside the four Gospels are only thirteen,[1] eight of which occur in the book of Revelation, where "wine" is used mostly symbolically, either to represent human depravity or divine retribution. This could suggest that we have only a total of five texts (Rom 14:21; Eph 5:18; 1Tim 3:8; 5:23; Titus 2:3) by which to determine the attitude of the Apostolic Church toward drinking.

In reality, however, the New Testament provides considerably more information on this subject through over twenty passages admonishing Christians to be "sober" or "temperate." These admonitions, as we shall see, are in

"temperate." These admonitions, as we shall see, are in most cases directly related to drinking practices. Thus, our determination of the New Testament teaching on drinking should be based both on those texts which speak specifically of wine and on those which offer general admonitions on sobriety and temperance.

The chapter is divided into four parts, the first three of which deal with wine-texts and the last one with the admonitions to sobriety and to temperance. Thus, the outline of the chapter is as follows:

1. Acts 2:13: "Filled with New Wine"

2. 1 Corinthians 11:21: "One is Hungry and Another is Drunk"

3. Ephesians 5:18: "Do Not Get Drunk with Wine"

4. Admonitions to Sobriety

PART I: ACTS 2:13: "FILLED WITH NEW WINE"

Importance of the Text. The apostles had scarcely begun their Messianic proclamation when they were accused of drunkenness. On the day of Pentecost the first company of believers received the gift of tongues enabling them to preach the Gospel in the languages of the people gathered for the feast at Jerusalem. While thousands believed in Christ as a result of the miracle, others began mocking the disciples, saying: "They are filled with new wine" (Acts 2:13).

Some interpret this text as indicating the customary drinking of alcoholic wine in the earliest apostolic community. This interpretation rests on three major assumptions. First, the mockers would not have accused Christians of being drunk unless they had seen some Christians drinking on previous occasions.[2] Second, the "new wine" (*gleukos*) was a "sweet wine" of alcoholic nature[3] which could make a person drunk if consumed in large quantity. Third, Peter in his response denied the charge not by saying, "How can we be drunk when we are abstainers?" but by pointing to the early hour of the

morning: "These men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day" (Acts 2:15).

Unwarranted Interpretation. This interpretation is unwarranted for three major reasons. It assumes that the accusation of the mockers was based on factual observation of Christian drinking. This is a gratuitous assumption, because mockers do not necessarily base their slander on factual observation. Even if they did, what they presumably had seen was Christians under the influence of the Holy Spirit rather than of alcoholic spirits. It is possible that they were misled by what they saw. The Jewish philosopher Philo, who lived at that time, tells us that the most sober persons, "abstainers," when under the influence of divine inspiration seemed to others to be in a drunken state.4

This possibility, however, seems hardly applicable here, because if the mockers really wished to charge the disciples with drunkenness, they would have accused them of being filled with "wine" (*oinos*) and not with "grape-juice" (*gleukos*). The term "*gleukos*" was used to designate unfermented grape juice. Pliny, for example, explicitly explains that what the Greeks call "*aigleucos*, this is our permanent must." He goes on to tell how to prevent its fermentation.

The Meaning of "*Gleukos*." Several Greek lexicons and scholars acknowledge that *gleukos* designates exclusively unfermented grape juice.6 For example, Horace Bumstead, the author of one of the most scholarly defenses of the moderationist view, offers this clear and conclusive explanation: "*Gleukos*, as in classical Greek, corresponds to the Latin *mustum*, meaning the newly expressed juice of the grape, and so has a less wide range of meaning than [the Hebrew] *tirosh* or *asis*. It occurs only once [Acts 2:13] and I see no necessity for trying to prove it intoxicating, as some have done, including Robinson. . . . It seems to me that Alford, and others, in arguing for the intoxicating character of *gleukos*, as a *sweet* wine, have lost sight of the classical distinction already pointed out between *gleukos*=*mustum*, sweet, because unfermented grape juice, and *oinos glukus*=sweet wine, so-called because, though fermented

glukus "sweet wine, so called because, though fermented, it was rich in sugar."7

Earlier in his lengthy article (71 pages) published in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Bumstead explains more fully that "with the Greeks the product of the wine-press could be sweet in three different senses: first, as *gleukos* (corresponding to the Latin *mustum*), when it was sweet from the lack of vinous fermentation; second, as *oinos glukus*, when it was fermented, but sweet from the presence of considerable untransformed sugar; and third, as *oinos hedus*, when it was sweet from the absence of acetous fermentation, or souring."8 *What this means is that when gleukos occurs by itself, as in Acts 2:13, it refers specifically to unfermented grape juice.*

The Irony of the Charge. In view of the meaning of *gleukos* as unintoxicating grape juice, the irony of the charge is self-evident. What the mockers meant is "These men, too abstemious to touch anything fermented, have made themselves drunk on grape juice." Or as Ernest Gordon puts it in modern speech, "These drys are drunk on soft drink."9 Bumstead perceptively asks, "If this was not the point of their 'mocking' how can the use of *gleukos*, instead of the common word *oinos*, be accounted for?"10 The inadequacy of the cause, grape juice, to produce the effect, drunkenness, is designed to add point to the derisive jest.

One can hardly fail to see in the irony of the charge that the apostles were drunk on grape juice (their usual beverage) an indirect but very important proof of their abstinent life-style and inferentially of the abstemious life-style of their Teacher.

Historical Confirmation. In his epistles, Peter, who acts as the spokesman of the Jerusalem Church in the first twelve chapters of Acts, alludes, as we shall see later in this chapter, to the practice of abstinence in the apostolic church. Later historical confirmation of this practice is provided by the testimony of Hegesippus, a church historian who, as Eusebius tells us, "lived immediately after the apostles."11 Writing regarding "James, the brother of the Lord, [who] succeeded to the government of

the Church in conjunction with the apostles," Hegesippus says: "He was holy from his mother's womb; and he drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat flesh."12 We can assume that the strict abstinent life-style of James, who for a time served as the presiding officer of the Jerusalem Church, served as an example for Apostolic Christians to follow.

An investigation of early Christian sources on the life-style of such Jewish Christian sects as the Ebionites, the Nazarenes, the Elkesaites and the Encratites, might provide considerable support for abstinence from fermented wine in the Apostolic Church.13 The fact that some of these sects went to the extreme of rejecting altogether both fermented and unfermented wine and using only water, even in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, suggests the existence of a prevailing concern for abstinence in the Apostolic Church. Such a concern apparently assumed fanatical forms among certain religious groups. It is my intention to pursue this research as time becomes available and to publish it as an additional chapter in a future edition of this book. Time restraints have not made this research possible at this time.

Peter's Response. The assumption that Peter's response to the charge of drunkenness implies that the apostles used some kind of fermented wine, because he did not flatly deny the charge, is discredited by two major considerations. Peter used the argument best suited to the character of the mockers. Had he said, "How can we be drunk when we never drink?" the jeering rejoinder might have been, "Except when no one sees you!" An appeal to their abstemious life-style would have been useless since it was already challenged. Thus, Peter met them on social grounds, challenging the credibility of their assumption. In effect he replied: "How can your assumption be right that we are drunk when it is only nine o'clock in the morning? You know, as well as I do, that people get drunk in the evening and not in the morning." Such a reply fit in the circumstance and exposed the insincerity of the mockers.

A second reason that Peter may have chosen not to deny flatly that they drank at all is suggested by the use of the word *gleukos* by the mockers. This word, as just

word *gleukos* by the mockers. This word, we just observed, means unfermented grape juice which Christians, except the Nazirites, generally drank. To deny that Christians drank at all would have meant denying that they drank *gleukos* ("grape juice"), but that was not true.

Conclusion. Summing up we can say that Acts 2:13 provides an indirect but telling proof that the apostles abstained from alcoholic beverages. As Ernest Gordon says, "There would be no point in referring to unfermented wine as a source of intoxication and the strange actions following, if it were not generally understood that the apostles used no intoxicating wine."14

PART II: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:21

"ONE IS HUNGRY AND ANOTHER IS DRUNK"

Importance of the Text. Moderationists see in Paul's reference to "drunkenness" at the communion table in the Corinthian church an unmistakable proof that alcoholic wine was used in the Apostolic Church both privately at home and publicly at the Lord's Supper. Paul's statement reads as follows: "When you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk" (1 Cor 11:20-21).

The reasoning of moderationists is that the problem of drunkenness at Corinth can only be explained by their use of alcoholic wine. As someone put it, "How could the Corinthians get drunk on Communion wine if it were not fermented?"15 Furthermore, it is argued that "it is significant to note that even in the light of their drunkenness, Paul does *not* issue a 'cease and desist' order in this matter."16 The argument is clear. Paul condemned the abuses at Corinth but not the use of alcoholic wine. We shall examine this claim by considering three points: (1) The Nature of the Feast; (2) The Meaning of the Verb *Methuo*; (3) The Implications of Paul's Admonition.

1. The Nature of the Feast

A Selfish Love Feast. To better appreciate the problems that developed at Corinth in conjunction with the Lord's Supper, we must understand the social customs of the time. It was customary for groups of people belonging to secular or religious organizations to meet together for common meals. In particular there was a certain kind of fellowship meal called *eranos* to which each participant brought food pooled together to make a common feast. The early Church adapted this custom, developing it into what came to be known as the *Agape* or Love Feast. All the church members brought what they could to the feast, and when all the food was pooled together, they sat down to a common meal. It was a lovely way of producing and nourishing real Christian fellowship. Many churches practice something similar today when they have a pot-luck meal together after church service.

In the church at Corinth the Love Feast seems to have been incorporated within the Lord's Supper, as we shall show below. Its celebration, however, degenerated into a selfish feast. The art of sharing was lost. The rich did not share their food with the poor but ate it by themselves in little exclusive groups. The result was that at the meal some were hungry while others were filled to satiety. Class distinctions, which should have been eliminated at the communion table, were accentuated. Good order and decency were disregarded, and the solemnity of the occasion was lost.

Unhesitatingly and unsparingly Paul rebukes this state of affairs, first of all by reminding the Corinthians of the purpose of their assembling together, namely, "to eat the Lord's supper" (1 Cor 11:20, KJV). The meaning of Paul's rebuke could be paraphrased as follows: "Though you come together professedly to partake of the Lord's Supper, you really do not celebrate it in a manner deserving of the name. For in eating, each one who has brought provisions goes ahead to eat eagerly and selfishly, ignoring the poor who have not been able to bring anything. The result is that while a member is *hungry* and unsatisfied, another is *filled* to satiety. Don't you have houses in which to eat and drink? Why do you transform the house of worship, dedicated to brotherly love, into a place of selfish feasting, putting to shame those who have

nothing? There is no way I can commend you for such selfish conduct" (paraphrase of 1 Cor 11:20-23).

Private Supper or Lord’s Supper? Paul’s rebuke suggests that Christians in Corinth had unwisely confused the Lord’s Supper with a social meal; possibly they had even reduced the Lord’s Supper to a social festival similar to the festivals observed among the Greeks. The latter suggestion seems more probable, because there is no indication in the passage that a fellowship meal preceded the actual Lord’s Supper.

Paul’s statement, "When you come together, it is not the Lord’s supper that you eat" (1 Cor 11:20) clearly indicates that the purpose of the gathering was to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, which, however, they had transformed into an ordinary festivity, presumably patterned after the feasts in honor of idols. This leads us to the following conclusion: *all* that was done at Corinth was irregular and improper. The Christians had entirely mistaken the nature of the sacred ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, converting it into a secular festivity, where even intemperance prevailed.

Many have supposed that the fellowship meal at Corinth was derived from the Last Supper which Jesus instituted *after* eating the Passover with His disciples. But it must be observed that the Passover was never seen by Christians as corresponding to a *preliminary* fellowship meal to be followed by the Lord’s Supper. Instead, Passover was a sacred festival which was understood to be superseded by the Lord’s Supper. There is no evidence in the Corinthian passage before us, or in any other New Testament passage, that the Lord’s Supper was observed in connection with a fellowship meal. This means that whatever was done at Corinth was irregular, improper and against the very instructions that Paul had "received from the Lord" and had "delivered" to the church (1 Cor 11:23).

In the light of this fact, any alleged "drunkenness" occurring at the Communion table of the Corinthian church can hardly serve to prove the existence of drinking of alcoholic beverages in the Apostolic Church. A local perversion can scarcely be indicative of a general Christian practice. Moreover, if the Corinthians deviated from the instructions

"delivered" unto them, then their misconduct is more a *warning* than an example for us.

2. The Meaning of the Verb *Methuo*

"Filled to the Full." It is generally assumed that drunkenness occurred at the Communion table of the Corinthian church. But is this true? Those who believe so base their conclusion on the common translation of the verb *methuei*, namely, "is drunk." The whole phrase in the RSV reads: "One is hungry and another is drunk" (1 Cor 11:21). On the basis of this translation many reason that if intoxicating wine was used by the Corinthians without apostolic rebuke, it can also be used by Christians today.

The fundamental fallacy of such reasoning is that it assumes that *methuo* means only "to be drunk." But our study of its usage in John 2:11 has shown that the verb *methuo* does not always signify intoxication and drunkenness. The context determines its exact meaning. In this case *methuei* is used antithetically to *peina* "hungry" and this requires that the verb be understood in the generic sense of "satiated" rather than in the narrow sense of "drunk." Leon C. Field makes this point clearly and conclusively: "*Methuei*, in this case, is plainly contrasted with *peina* which is correctly rendered as 'hungry.' The antithesis, therefore, requires the former to be understood in the generic sense of 'surfeited,' not in the narrow sense of 'drunken.' The overfilled man is compared to the underfilled man. This is the interpretation adopted by the great body of expositors, ancient and modern."17

Scholarly Support. Among the expositors cited by Field are Chrysostom, Bengel, Grotius, Wycliff, Kuinoel, Bilroth, MacKnight, Newcome, Bloomfield, Clarke, Lightfoot, Dean Stanley, and Whedom.18 Another who could be mentioned is Clement of Alexandria, who lived only a century and a half after Paul. In his *Instructor* (book 2, 1), Clement, as A. W. Samson points out, "contradicts the suggestion that intoxicating wine was there used. He indicates that it is *food* rather than the *drink* of the feast to which Paul refers, and that he reproves them for 'clutching at the delicacies,' for 'eating beyond the demands of nourishment.'"19

Adam Clarke makes the same point in his commentary on this text: "The people came together, and it appears brought their provisions with them; some had much, others had less; some ate to excess, others had scarcely enough to suffice nature. 'One was hungry, and the other was drunken, *methuei*, was filled to the full;' this is the sense of the word in many places of Scripture."20

The Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, provides numerous examples where *methuo* is used in the generic sense of "filled to the full." One of them is Psalm 23:5 which says: "my cup overflows" (*methuskon*—full to the brim). Another example is Psalm 65:10: "Thou waterest its furrows abundantly [*methuson*]." Yet another is Jeremiah 31:14: "I will feast [*methuso*—satiate] the soul of the priests with abundance." Examples such as these clearly show that *methuo* is often used in Scripture in a generic sense to express full satisfaction, satiety.

3. The Implications of Paul's Admonition

No Allusion to Drunkenness. Paul's rebuke and admonition suggest that drunkenness was not the problem at the Communion table of the Corinthian church. His words of rebuke are, "What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?" (v. 22). If drunkenness had been the problem, presumably Paul would have said, "Do you not have houses to eat and get drunk in?" The fact that Paul in his rebuke makes no allusion to "drunkenness" suggests that the problem at Corinth was not intoxication with alcoholic wine but rather one of excessive indulgence in eating and drinking.

If it were true that the Corinthian Christians were guilty of the awful sin of becoming inebriated during the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Paul would have condemned their sacrilegious conduct in different and much sterner language. In the previous chapter Paul does not hesitate to call the participation of some Corinthians at pagan religious meals as "to be partners with demons" (1 Cor 10:20). Then he adds: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons." (1 Cor 10:21).

table of the Lord and the table of demons" (1 Cor 10:21). Earlier in the same epistle Paul categorically states that no "drunkards . . . will inherit the kingdom of God" and he admonishes the members "not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is . . . [a] drunkard" (1 Cor 6:10; 5:11). On the basis of this admonition it is fair to suppose that if some got drunk at the Communion table, Paul would have warned the rest to stay away from them.

Implication of the Admonition. Paul does not use strong language in condemning the abuses occurring in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He merely admonishes the Corinthians to satisfy their hunger at home to avoid both the indecorum that had been manifested and the condemnation to which it had exposed them: "So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another — if any one is hungry, let him eat at home—lest you come together to be condemned" (1 Cor 11:33-34). This admonition suggests that the problem at Corinth was indulgence in eating rather than intoxication by drinking alcoholic wine. Had the Corinthian church members been drunk at the Communion table, then Paul could hardly have said earlier in the same letter that in the past some of them were drunkards "but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11).

Conclusion. In the light of the above considerations we conclude that Paul's reference in the King James Version to "drunkenness" at the Communion table of the Corinthian church, offers no support for a moderate use of alcoholic wine either privately at home or publicly at the Lord's Supper. First, because whatever was done at Corinth,was a departure from the instructions Paul had "delivered" to the church and thus their actions are more of a *warning* than an example for us. Second, because the problem at the Communion table, as we have shown, appear not to have been intoxication with alcoholic wine but indulgence in eating.

PART III: EPHESIANS 5:18

"DO NOT GET DRUNK WITH WINE"

Importance of the Text. After admonishing the Ephesians to abstain from immorality and impurity, Paul particularizes his admonition saying: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18). Moderationists see in this passage a clear Biblical sanction of moderate drinking. They argue that what Paul condemns here is the *abuse* and not the *moderate use* of alcoholic wine. "The condemnation of misuse of wine," writes Markus Barth, "does not preclude a proper use of alcoholic beverage."21

Had Paul intended to forbid wine-drinking altogether, they claim, he would have said, as Kenneth Gentry puts it, "Drink no wine at all." Instead he said, "Be not *drunk* with wine" (Eph 5:18).22 The next phrase, "for that is debauchery" (RSV) or "wherein is excess" (KJV), is similarly interpreted as referring to the state of drunkenness and not to wine as the active principle of debauchery. Horace Bumstead, for example, maintains that "to connect *en ho* [in which] with *oinos* [wine], as some do, instead of with *methu-skesthe oino* [drunk with wine], is inconsistent with the employment of so strong a word as *methuskethe* [drunk]."23

We shall examine the above claim by considering five points: (1) The Structure of the Passage, (2) The Relative Clause, (3) Ancient and Modern Translations, (4) The Meaning of *Asotia*, and (5) Rabbinical Testimonies.

1. The Structure of the Passage

Two Contrasting Statements. The passage consists of two major statements placed in contrast (antithesis) to each other: "drunk with wine" *versus* "filled with the Spirit." The antithesis suggests that the contrast is not between moderation and excess, but between fullness of wine and fullness of the Spirit. The two statements point to an inherent incompatibility of nature and operation between the *sources* of such fullness, namely, inebriating wine and the Holy Spirit. The fact that inebriating wine and the Holy Spirit are mutually exclusive, because no one can be filled with half of each, precludes the sanction for a moderate use of intoxicating wine.

This point is made clearer by quoting the preceding text, which says: "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is," namely, that we should be filled not with ardent spirits but with the Holy Spirit. Thus, the structure of the passage suggests that Paul is not recommending a supposedly safe and moderate ingestion of wine, but a full infilling of the Holy Spirit. It is scarcely conceivable that a person "filled with the Spirit" would crave intoxicating wine.

Two Similar Passages. Numerous commentators, not themselves abstainers, illustrate this text by referring to two similar texts. The first is Luke 1:15 where the angel says to Zechariah concerning John the Baptist: "And he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit." The second passage is from the story of Pentecost and consists of two verses: "For these men are not drunk . . ." " And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:15, 4).

In both of these passages the infilling of the Holy Spirit is connected to abstention from intoxicating drink. The striking similarity between these two passages and Ephesians 5:18 suggests that in the latter text also the infilling of the Holy Spirit precludes the drinking of alcoholic beverages.

In his comment on Luke 1:15, Hermann Olshausen aptly says: "Man feels the want of strengthening through spiritual influences from without; instead of seeking for these in the Holy Spirit, he in his blindness has recourse to the *natural* spirit, that is, to wine and strong drink. Therefore, according to the point of view of the Law, the Old Testament recommends abstinence from wine and strong drinks in order to preserve the soul free from all merely natural influences, and by that means to make it more susceptible of the operations of the Holy Spirit."24

"Drink no Wine at All." The antithesis between wine and Holy Spirit present in Luke 1:15 and Acts 2:15, 4 may have been borrowed by Paul to express a similar truth in Ephesians 5:18. This may explain why Paul wrote "Do not get drunk with wine" instead of "Drink no wine at all." Like Luke, he may have wished to emphasize the contrast

Luke, he may have wished to emphasize the contrast between fullness of wine and fullness of the Spirit.

Another reason that Paul may have chosen not to say "Drink no wine at all" is suggested by 1 Timothy 5:23, where he recommends the use of "a little wine" for medical purposes: "for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." This text will be examined in Chapter 7. The fact that Paul believed that there was a legitimate, though limited, use of "wine" would logically have precluded him from prohibiting the use of wine altogether in any form. We must also remember that the generic term *oinos* "wine," as we have shown in Chapter 2, could refer either to fermented or unfermented grape juice. Had Paul said "Drink no wine at all" without qualifications, he would have excluded even the drinking of wholesome, nourishing grape juice.

2. The Relative Clause

The Antecedent of the Relative Pronoun. Paul's admonition "Do not get drunk with wine" is followed by a warning which in the RSV is rendered "for that is debauchery." The question to be considered now is, What is debauchery? Is it wine as the causative agent of debauchery or drunkenness as a state of debauchery? The answer depends on which of the two is taken to be the antecedent of the relative clause *"en ho*--in which." A literal translation of the Greek text would read: "And do not get drunk with wine, in which [*en ho*] is debauchery [*asotia*—literally, 'unsavableness']." The RSV rendering of "*en ho*—in which" with "for that" makes the condition of being drunk with wine, rather than wine itself, the subject of "debauchery." This construction of the sentence, as Leon Field points out, "is expressly founded on the assumption that the use of wine is elsewhere allowed in the New Testament, and not on any exegetical necessities in the text itself."25

From a grammatical viewpoint, the subject of "in which" can be either the previous word "wine" or the drunkenness spoken of in the preceding clause. This fact is recognized by such commentators as R. C. H. Lenski, who says: "'In which' refers to the condition of being drunk with wine or to '*wine*' *as here used, a means for becoming drunk*."26

"wine" as here used, a means for becoming drunk." 26 Robert Young, the author of the *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, renders the relative clause "in which" accurately in his Bible translation: "And be not drunk with wine, *in which* is dissoluteness, but be filled in the Spirit."27

Preference for "Wine." Historically, numerous translators and commentators have seen "wine" rather than the state of drunkenness as the antecedent of "in which." The reason is suggested by the position of *oino* ("with wine"), which in Greek comes immediately after the verb "drunk" and before the relative "in which." Though the immediate juxtaposition of "wine" between the verb and the relative is not absolutely determinative, it strongly suggests that the warning of the relative clause is about wine as the active cause of dissoluteness rather than drunkenness as a state of dissoluteness.

Support for this view is provided also by the fact that the words "Do not get drunk with wine," as *The Interpreter's Bible* commentary points out, "are cited from Prov. 23:31 (the LXX according to Codex A)."28 If Paul is quoting Proverbs 23:31 as found in the LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, then we have reason to believe that Paul is warning against wine as such, since the text in Proverbs condemns the use of intoxicating wine ("Do not look at wine when it is red"), rather than its abuse.

Ancient Translations. This understanding of Ephesians 5:18 as a condemnation of intoxicating wine itself is supported by numerous ancient and modern translations. Tertullian (about A. D. 160-225), who is regarded as the father of Latin Christianity, renders the text as follows: "*et nolite inebriari vino*, *in quo est luxuria* " ("And be not inebriated with wine, in which is voluptuousness").29 The connection between *vino* "with wine" and *quo* "which" is unmistakable in this Latin translation, because the relative *quo* has the same neuter gender of *vino*, upon which it depends.

Besides his translation, Tertullian reveals his understanding of the text as a prohibition against wine drinking in his usage of the text in his treatise *Against*

Marcion, where he says: "'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,'—a precept which is suggested by the passage of the prophet, where the seducers of the consecrated [Nazirites] to drunkenness are rebuked: 'Ye gave wine to my holy ones to drink' [Amos 2:12]. This prohibition from drink was given also to the high priest Aaron and his sons."30

About two centuries after Tertullian, Jerome translated Ephesians 5:18 in exactly the same way in his famous Latin translation of the Bible, known as the Vulgate (about A. D. 400). The Vulgate has served through the centuries as the official Latin Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

Jerome's understanding of this text as an admonition to abstain from the use of wine is indicated also by his usage of the text. In a letter to Laeta, a lady who wrote to him asking how she should bring up her infant daughter, Jerome says: "Let her learn even now not to drink wine 'wherein is excess'" (Eph 5:18).31 In another letter to Eustochium, Jerome relates the story of a noble Roman lady, Paula, who on her visit to the Holy Land "called to mind the cave in which Lot found refuge, and with tears in her eyes warned the virgins her companions to beware of 'wine wherein is excess' [Eph 5:18]; for it was to this that the Moabites and Ammonites owe their origin."32 Jerome's understanding of Ephesians 5:18 is significant since he is regarded as the most famous early Christian translator of the Bible.

Modern Translations. Several classical and modern translations have followed the Vulgate in its faithful literalness. For example, the French Synodal Version reads: "Ne vous enivrez pas de vin: car le vin porte à la dissolution" ("Do not inebriate yourselves with wine, for wine leads to dissoluteness"). To remove any possibility for misunderstanding, the translators have repeated the word "wine" in the relative clause. Other French translations, such as the David Martin and the Version d'Ostervald also establish a clear connection between wine and the relative clause. Both read: "Ne vous enivrez point de vin, dans lequel il y a de la dissolution" ("Do not inebriate yourselves with wine, in which there is dissolution").

In English one could argue that the antecedent of "in which" is the drunkenness spoken of in the preceding clause. This uncertainty is caused by the fact that in the English language the relative pronoun "which" has no gender, and consequently can be connected to any antecedent. In French, however, "lequel" ("in which") is masculine and thus can only refer to "vin" ("wine") which is also masculine. The connection between the two is unmistakable in these French translations.

The same clear connection between "wine" and "dissoluteness" is found in the two Spanish versions, Cipriano de Valera (A. D. 1900) and Nácar, Colunga, where the relative clause reads respectively: "en el cual hay disolucion" ("in which is dissoluteness") and "en el cual está el desenfreno" ("in which is excess"). In both instances the relative "cual" ("which") is preceded by the masculine article "el," because it refers to the masculine noun "vino" ("wine"). The connection is even clearer in the Spanish Catholic Version which reads "vino fomento da la injuria" ("wine which causes harm"). A similar rendering is found in the margin of the New American Standard Bible which reads: "wine, in which is dissipation."

The Good News German Bible ("Die Gute Nachricht") provides another clear example where wine is the subject of the relative clause: "Betrinkt euch nicht; denn der Wein macht haltlos" ("Do not get drunk; because wine makes one unsteady or unprincipled").[33] The Italian Protestant version Riveduta by Giovanni Luzzi, as well as the Catholic Version produced by the Pontifical Biblical Institute, follow the sentence construction of the French and Spanish versions cited above. The Riveduta reads: "E non v'inebriate di vino; esso porta alla dissolutezza" ("And do not inebriate yourselves with wine; it [wine] leads to dissoluteness"). The antecedent of "esso" ("it") is unmistakably "vino," because it is of the same masculine gender as "vino," since it depends upon it.

The sampling of ancient and modern translations cited above should suffice to show that historically many translators have understood the relative clause of Ephesians 5:18 as representing a condemnation not of drunkenness but of wine itself. If these translators are

drunkenness but of wine itself. If these translators are correct, as I believe they are for the reasons mentioned above, then Ephesians 5:18 provides a powerful indictment against the actual use of intoxicating wine and not merely against its abuse. A look at the noun *asotia*, rendered by the RSV as "debauchery," will help us appreciate the nature of the condemnation.

3. The Meaning of *Asotia*

Moral Dissoluteness. The noun *asotia* occurs in two other places in the New Testament, namely, in Titus 1:6 and in 1 Peter 4:4, and in both places it is rendered as "profligacy" in the RSV. The word is compounded of the negative *a* and a noun from the verb *sozein*, to save. Literally it signifies the absence of salvation—a state of hopeless moral dissoluteness. Albert Barnes explains that *asotia* denotes that "which is unsafe, not to be recovered, lost beyond recovery; then that which is abandoned to sensuality and lust; dissoluteness, debauchery, revelry. The meaning here [Eph 5:18] is that all this follows the use of wine."34

The possible connection between wine as the causing agent of "drunkenness" and *asotia*, the condition of moral dissoluteness, suggests that the passage views not only the abuse but also the use of wine as intrinsically evil. Leon C. Field expresses this view, noting that "it would be difficult to indicate any other arrangement of the words of this passage which would so clearly and forcibly express the idea that insalvableness *inheres* in wine as its essential characteristic."35

Alcohol Affects the Mind. The reason that the use of intoxicating beverages can easily place a person in a state of *asotia*, that is, of moral corruption inimical to the reception of saving truth, is that alcohol deranges the functions of the mind, which is the channel through which the Holy Spirit works. This is why Paul urges Christians to be filled not with wine but with the Holy Spirit.

"Let Christians," counsels Albert Barnes, "when about to indulge in a glass of wine, think of this admonition [Eph 5:18]. Let them remember that their bodies should be the

temple of the Holy Ghost rather than a receptacle for intoxicating drinks. Was any man ever made a better Christian by the use of wine? Was any minister ever better fitted to counsel an anxious sinner, or to pray, or to preach the gospel, by the use of intoxicating drinks? Let the history of wine-drinking and intemperate clergymen answer."36

4. Rabbinical Testimonies

Condemnation of Wine. Rabbinical literature provides several examples to support and illustrate our interpretation of Ephesians 5:18 as a condemnation not only of the abuse but also of the use of intoxicating wine. We shall cite several examples in order to dispel the mistaken notion that the Jews, like the Bible writers, saw nothing intrinsically evil in the moderate use of wine. This popular notion has greatly influenced the interpretation of those Biblical teachings dealing with alcoholic beverages.

In their commentary on the New Testament based on rabbinic comments, Strack and Billerbeck give numerous rabbinical statements under Ephesians 5:18. They introduce such statements, by noting: "In rabbinical writings there are numerous warnings against wine."37 For our purpose we shall quote the following statements cited by these authors: "Wine separates man from the way of life and leads him in the pathway of death, because wine leads to idolatry. . . . Thus we learn that wherever [Scripture] speaks of wine, there you find also dissoluteness . . . For this Isaiah said: ‘The strength of the law is in salvation, but the strength of wine is in sorrow. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine’ (Is 5:22). For this we read: ‘Who has a woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? . . . Those who tarry long over wine’ (Prov 23:29-30). When wine enters the body, out goes sense; where ever there is wine there is no understanding."38

Similar rabbinic warnings against wine are found in the compilation of Talmudic statements on wine by Rabbi Isidore Koplowitz. Here are some: "Whenever wine enters a person, his mind becomes confused."39 "Rabbi Isaac said, ‘The evil spirit entices a person only while he is eating and drinking, and when one becomes merry by wine, then the evil spirit has the mastery over him. . . . The

drinking of wine causes the evil inclinations to be awakened within a person, as it is written, 'And they made their father [Lot] drink wine that night etc.' (Gen. 19:33)."40

Permanent Prohibition. Another statement attributed to Rabbi Eliezer makes the prohibition against drinking wine a permanent law for all times: "Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded Aaron, 'Do not drink wine nor strong drink.' Do not assume that this injunction against wine and strong drink was only for the past, namely as long as the holy Temple at Jerusalem was still in existence, as it is written, 'When ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation,' but you have to guard against wine for all times to come, for wine is an omen of curse."41 An extreme example of how evil intoxicating beverages were in the mind of some Jews is the rabbinic statement that "Samuel did not pray in a house that contained intoxicating drinks (Talmud Babli Erubin 65a)."42

Conclusion. The foregoing analysis of Ephesians 5:18 has shown that this text provides *no Biblical sanction for moderate use of alcoholic beverages.* On the contrary, the structure of the passage as well as the possible connection between "wine" and the relative clause, a connection recognized by numerous ancient and modern translations, makes this text *a most powerful Biblical indictment of intoxicating wine.*

The intent of Paul in this passage is to show the irreconcilable contrast that exists between the spirit of fermented wine and the Holy Spirit. In the life of a believer the two are mutually exclusive. Summing up, the thought of Ephesians 5:18-19 can be paraphrased as follows: "Do not get drunk with wine, because the use of wine places a person in a state of *asotia*, that is, of moral corruption inimical to the reception of saving truth. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Find enjoyment not in the stimulation of wine but in the inspiration of the Spirit who causes you to sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."

PART IV: ADMONITIONS TO SOBRIETY

Importance of Two Terms. In their epistles Paul and Peter employ two terms (*sophron* and *nephalios*) both of

which are usually rendered as "temperate" or "sober." The two terms are not synonymous, since technically speaking *sophron* denotes mental sobriety and *nephalios* physical sobriety or abstinence. On account of their affinity of meaning, however, the two terms are often merged or used interchangeably. This happens because each term describes the same virtue, though from a different standpoint.

"Physical abstinence," explains Leon Field, "is the condition of the clearest mental sobriety, and mental sobriety is the characteristic of the strictest physical abstinence. So it happens that the term signifying mental sobriety is used metaphorically for physical abstinence, and *vice versa*."43

We shall now consider the meaning and usage of the two terms separately. The study will show that in both secular and Biblical Greek, the primary meaning of the two terms and their derivatives, is to abstain from all intoxicating substances. This means, as we shall see, that several of the apostolic injunctions to sobriety are primarily injunctions to abstinence from intoxicating beverages.

1. Mental Sobriety

The Meaning of *Sophron*. The term *sophron* and its related word group occur 15 times in the New Testament, 9 of which are in the Pastoral Epistles.44 The RSV renders them as "temperate" in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 2:2, "sober" in Titus 2:12, Acts 26:25 and Romans 12:3, "right mind" in Mark 5:15, Luke 8:35 and 2 Corinthians 5:13, "sane" in 1 Peter 4:7, "self-controlled" in Titus 1:8 and "sensibly" and "sensible" in 1 Timothy 2:9 and Titus 2:5.

The word *sophron* is compounded of *saos* "safe" or "sound" and *phren* "mind." Thus, literally it signifies "sound-minded." The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* defines it as "'rational,' in the sense of what is intellectually sound."45 Most Greek lexicons concur in defining the group words related to *sophron* as "sound mind." Arndt and Gingrich render "to be in one's right mind;"46 Donnegan, "sound in intellect, not deranged;"47

mind;"46 Donnegan, "sound in intellect, not deranged;"47 Green, "of a sound mind, sane, staid, temperate, chaste."48

While retaining the primary idea of mental soundness, *sophron* and its related words are never divorced from the idea of physical abstinence, which provides the basis for a sound mind. The Romans expressed this in the well-known proverb *mens sana in corpore sano* ("a sound mind in a sound body").

Classical, Jewish and Christian Writers. The idea of abstinence is often present in the use and interpretation of the word *sophron* by classical, Jewish, and Christian writers. In his *Rhetoric* Aristotle (384-322 B. C.) defines *sophrosune* as "the virtue by which men act with reference to the pleasures of the body as the law commands."49 In his *Ethics* he says: "By *abstaining* from pleasures we become sober [*sophrones*]."50 And again he states: "He who *abstains* from physical pleasure, and in this very thing takes delight, is sober [*sophron*]."51

In the Jewish work known as *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (from about the first century A.D.) the term *sophron* is used as a clear reference to abstinence from wine: "But if ye would live soberly [*sophrosune*] do not touch wine at all, lest ye sin in words of outrage, and in fightings and slanders, and transgressions of the commandments of God, and ye perish before your time."52

The Jewish philosopher Philo (about 20 B.C.-50 A.D.) frequently uses the word group with the meaning of abstention from sensual desires in general and from wine in particular.53 He views the *sophrosune* as a person who is free from the drunkenness of the world. This is indicated especially by his use of the opposite of *sophrosune*, namely, *aphrosune,* to describe a person who "inflamed by wine drowns the whole life in ceaseless and unending drunkenness."54

In the patristic writings, as in the classical authors, *sophrosune* is employed with reference to physical abstinence. Clement of Alexandria (about A.D. 150-215)

abstinence. Clement of Alexandria (about A. D. 150-215), for example, in discussing the life-style of young people, says: "I therefore admire those who have adopted an austere life, and who are fond of water, the medicine of temperance [*tes sophrosunes*], and flee as far as possible from wine, shunning it as they would the danger of fire."55 This meaning of *sophron* and its word group as abstinence and chastity is, according to Ulrich Luck, "a widespread understanding"56 not only in Hellenistic Judaism but also in the writings of the early church. His scholarly article in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* provides numerous examples of such usage.

Paul's Admonition. In the epistles of Paul and Peter, several admonitions to sober-mindedness explicitly relate to physical abstinence on which the existence and exercise of sobriety rest. This is indicated especially by the close connection in which they stand with such terms as *me paroinos, enkrate* and *nephalios*, all of which, as we shall see, refer primarily to abstinence from intoxicating wine.

In 1 Timothy 3:2-3 Paul states: "Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, *temperate, sensible*, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money." The two terms "temperate, sensible" are here used to translate the Greek *nephalion* and *sophrona*. The first, as we shall show below, means "abstinent" and the second "of sound mind," or "sober-minded." "The order of terms," as Lees and Burns point out, "is instructive. The Christian overseer is to be *nephalion*, 'abstinent'—strictly sober in body, in order that he may be sober in mind."57 The two words occur in the same order in Titus 2:2, though the word "serious" is placed between them. In 1 Timothy 3:2-3 the two words stand in close connection with *me paroinon*, a term which literally means "not near wine." On the significance of the latter, more will be said below.

In Titus 1:6-8, where Paul repeats to a large extent what he said in 1 Timothy 3 about the qualifications for the office of bishop/elder, the order is somewhat different: " . . . hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself

[*sophrona*], upright, holy, and self-controlled [*enkrate*]" (v. 8). Here *sophrona* ("sober-minded"), translated "master of himself" by the RSV, precedes *enkrate*, a term which as we shall see below, is also employed in the sense of abstinence.

Peter's Admonition. A clearer connection between sober-mindedness and physical abstinence is found in 1 Peter 4:7: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane [*sophronesate*] and sober [*nepsate*] for your prayers." The verb *nepsate* is the (aorist) imperative form of *nepho*, which some etymologists derive from the prefix *ne* "not" and *pino* "to drink," thus literally, not to drink, while others from *ne* "not" and *poinos* (for *oinos* "wine"), thus literally, "without wine."

The basic meaning of the verb *nepho*, as most Greek authorities cited below recognize, is "to be sober, in contradistinction to being drunk." Thus, what Peter is actually saying in 1 Peter 4:7 is "keep mentally sober and physically abstinent for your prayers." It is not difficult to see the connection among mental sobriety, physical abstinence and prayer life. Persons who use intoxicating beverages weaken their mental alertness, and consequently either ignore their prayer life or pray for the wrong things.

In conclusion, some of the apostolic admonitions to mental sobriety, expressed through the *sophron* word group, are clearly connected to physical abstinence, which determines the existence and exercise of mental sobriety.

2. Physical Abstinence

The Meaning of the Verb *Nepho*. The adjective *nephalios* and the verb *nepho* are used in the New Testament mostly to denote physical abstinence. The adjective *nephalios* occurs only three times in the pastoral epistles and is consistently rendered by the RSV as "temperate" (1 Tim 3:2, 11; Titus 2:2). The verb *nepho* occurs six times and is translated by the RSV five times "be sober" (1 Thess 5:6, 8; 1 Pet 1:13; 4:7; 5:8) and once "be steady" (2 Tim 4:5). Before examining the meaning and usage of these two words in the New Testament, we

and usage of these two words in the New Testament, we want to verify how they are defined in Greek lexicons and used in Greek literature.

The basic meaning of *nepho*, as mentioned earlier, is abstention from intoxication. In his article on this word group in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, O. Bauernfeind states: "The concept which underlies the verb *nepho* 'to be sober' and the whole word group is formally negative. It is the opposite of intoxication, both 1. in the literal sense of intoxication with wine, and 2. in the figurative sense of states of intoxication attributable to other causes."58 The Jewish philosopher Philo illustrates this definition when he says: "So too soberness [*nephein*] and drunkenness are opposites."59

There is noteworthy unanimity among Greek lexicons on the primary meaning of this verb. Liddell and Scott give as the first meaning of *nepho*, "to be sober, drink no wine." In his *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Lampe renders it, "be temperate, drink no wine."60 The first example given by Lampe is from Origen's treatise *Against Celsus*, where the pagan philosopher Celsus accuses a Christian teacher of acting "like a drunken man, who, entering a company of drunkards, should accuse those who are sober [*nephontas*] of being drunk." To such an accusation Origen responds, saying, "But let him show, say from the writings of Paul, that the apostle of Jesus gave way to drunkenness, and that his words were not those of soberness."61

Donnegan defines *nepho* as "to live abstemiously, to abstain from wine;"62 Greene, "to be sober, not intoxicated;"63 Robinson, "to be sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect to wine;"64 Abbott-Smith, "to be sober, abstain from wine."65

The Meaning of the Adjective *Nephalios*. The adjective *nephalios* is defined by these lexicographers in harmony with their rendering of the verb. For example, Lampe gives as the first meaning of *nephalios*, "without wine, temperate."66 His first supportive example is from Clement of Alexandria, who says: "I therefore admire those who have adopted an austere [*nephalion*

poton=abstemious drink] life, and who are fond of water, the medicine of temperance, and flee as far as possible from wine, shunning it as they would the danger of fire."67

Among other lexicographers not cited above there is Hesychius, who gives as the primary meaning of *nephalios*, "not having drunk."68 In Stephanus' Thesaurus the *nephalios* is said to be "he who abstains from wine."69 In the Greek Dictionary of Byzantius, published in Athens in 1839, *nephalios* is defined as "one who does not drink wine."70 Similarly Bauernfeind defines *nephalios* as "holding no wine." He explains that originally the word was used "for the offerings without wine" and subsequently for "the sober manner of life of those who make them."71

Hellenistic Testimonies. Numerous instances of the use of *nepho* and *nephalios* in the sense of abstention from wine occur in classical Greek literature.72 For our purpose it is of greater significance to look into the usage of Hellenistic writers. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, the compound verb *eknepho* and the verbal noun *eknepsi* are found in Genesis 9:24, 1 Samuel 25:37 and Joel 1:5. In each instance the meaning is to become sober, without the influence of wine.

The testimonies of the two famous Jewish writers, Josephus and Philo, are significant for our investigation, since they were contemporaries of Paul and Peter. In his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus writes of the priests: "Those who wear the sacerdotal garments are without spot and eminent for their purity and sobriety [*nephalioi*], not being permitted to drink wine as long as they wear those garments."73 Similarly, in his *Wars of the Jews*, Josephus says of the priests, "They abstained [*nephontes*] chiefly from wine, out of this fear, lest otherwise they should transgress some rules of their ministration."74

Like Josephus, Philo explains in his *De Specialibus Legibus* that the priest must officiate as *nephalios*, totally abstinent from wine, because he has to carry out the directions of the law and must be in a position to act as the final earthly court.75 In his treatise *On Drunkenness*, Philo, speaking of those who "swill themselves insatiably with

speaking of those who "swill themselves insatiably with wine," says: "For such deliberately and under no compulsion put the cup of strong drink to their lips, and so it is also with full deliberation that these men eliminate soberness [*nephalion*] from their soul and choose madness in its place."76

Implication of Testimonies. The natural and necessary inference from the mass of testimonies cited above is that Peter and Paul must have been familiar with the primary meaning of the verb *nepho* and its adjective *nephalios* as abstinence from intoxicating beverages. This being the case, they employed these terms with such a primary meaning in at least some of their admonitions to sobriety. Even if in some instances they used these terms figuratively to refer to mental rather than physical sobriety, in no case would the underlying idea of total abstinence be lost.

Those who interpret the apostolic injunctions to sobriety as referring either to mental sobriety or to a moderate use of wine base their interpretation on the assumption that Scripture condemns not the use but the abuse of wine. For example, in *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, Moulton and Milligan define *nephalios* as "*sober, temperate; abstaining from wine,* either *entirely* (Josephus Ant. 3, 12, 2) or at least *from its immoderate use*: 1 Tim 3:2, 11; Titus 2:2."77 But the three texts cited contain no suggestion of abstention from the immoderate use of wine. They simply express Paul's admonition to bishops, women and older men to be *nephalious*.

If Josephus, Philo and a host of other writers used *nephalios* in the primary sense of "abstaining from wine," why should not Paul have used it in the same way? Dean Alford argues that such meaning had become obsolete in the apostles' day.78 This can hardly be true, as attested by the above cited testimonies of Josephus and Philo. Moreover, long after the apostolic age, Greek writers use the word in the primary sense of abstinence. For example, the philosopher Porphyry (about 232-303) says "But be sober [*nephalion*] and drink without wine."79

Translators' Bias. The foregoing considerations lead us

to wonder whether *nepho* and *nephalios* have been consistently translated in the New Testament with the secondary sense of being "temperate, sober, steady," rather than in the primary sense of being "abstinent," because of the translators' predilection for drinking. By interpreting these terms figuratively, translators and expositors have been able, as Ernest Gordon puts it, to "save the face of wine while condemning drunkenness."80

The bias toward wine can be detected even in some Greek lexicons. Besides Moulton and Milligan cited earlier, mention can be made of Liddell and Scott. They define *nepho* as "to be sober, drink no wine," and they give a host of supportive references. Then they give the metaphorical meaning as "to be self-controlled, to be sober and wary" and they give 1 Thessalonians 5:6 and 1 Peter 4:7 in addition to a few pagan texts as supportive references. As we shall see below, the two New Testament texts support more the former than the latter meaning.

With regard to the adjective *nephalios* Liddell and Scott define it as "make a libation without wine . . . unmixed with wine" when referring to offerings, and they give a battery of supportive texts. When referring to persons, they render it as "sober" and give 1 Timothy 3:2, 11, Titus 2:2 and Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* 3, 12, 2, as supportive texts. The texts of Timothy and Titus, as we shall discuss below, favor the primary meaning of abstinence. Josephus' statement, as we have already seen, leaves no doubt that to him *nephalios* meant "not being permitted to drink wine." All of this shows that none of the references given really support the figurative meaning of mental sobriety. It would seem that the passages in Timothy and Titus are first translated "sober" or "temperate" rather than abstinent, and then they are cited as proof of the use of such meaning. Having looked at the meaning of *nepho* and *nephalios* in writers outside the Bible,we shall now endeavor to determine their meaning in the epistles of Peter and Paul.

3. *Nepho* as Physical Abstinence

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8. Paul's first usage of *nepho* occurs in his letter to the Thessalonians. After warning the

occurs in his letter to the Thessalonians. After warning the Thessalonians about the sudden and unexpected manner of Christ's coming "like a thief in the night" (1Thess 5:2), he admonishes them saying: "So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober [*nephomen*]. For those who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But, since we belong to the day, let us be sober [*nephomen*], and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess 5:6-8).

In this passage Paul twice admonishes the Thessalonians to "be sober" (*nephomen*). What is the meaning of *nephomen* in its context? Is Paul exhorting the Thessalonians to be mentally vigilant or physically abstinent or both? The context suggests that both mental vigilance and physical abstinence are included.

The passage consists of a number of contrasting parallels: light and darkness, day and night, waking and sleeping, to be sober and to be drunk. Since Paul contrasts the sons of the day who are sober with those of the night who are drunk, it is evident that in this context the exhortation to "be sober" means not only to be mentally vigilant but also physically abstinent. In the Scripture mental vigilance is closely connected with physical abstinence from intoxicating beverages. The unfaithful servant who failed to watch for the return of his master began "to eat and drink and get drunk" (Luke 12:45).

Another indication that Paul wishes *nephomen* to be taken both literally and figuratively is the connection between sobriety and wakefulness: "Let us keep awake and be sober" (v. 6). The first verb, *gregoromen,* refers to mental watchfulness and the second, *nephomen,* to physical abstinence. Otherwise it would be a needless repetition (tautology): "Let us keep awake and be awake." It is evident that Paul connects mental watchfulness with physical abstinence, because the two go together. Mental vigilance in the New Testament is often connected with physical abstinence. This will become clearer as we consider the other passages in question.

1 Peter 1:13. In addition to 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8, the verb *nepho* occurs three times in the first epistle of Peter

verb *nepho* occurs three times in the first epistle of Peter (1:13; 4:7; 5:8). In all three instances, the word is translated "be sober" in the RSV. The casual reader might think that Peter's admonition to "be sober" means to be prudent, vigilant or temperate, without reference to alcohol. But a closer examination indicates that, as in 1 Thessalonians, the verb here also refers to both mental vigilance and physical abstinence. Note should be taken of the fact that in all three texts, Peter's exhortation to "be sober" occurs in the context of readiness for the imminent return of Christ. This implies that Peter, like Paul, grounds his call to a life of abstinence and holiness in the certainty and imminence of Christ's return.

The first usage of *nepho* in 1 Peter occurs in 1:13: "Therefore gird up your minds, be sober [*nephontes*], set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Here Peter, like Paul, correlates mental vigilance ("gird up your minds") with physical abstinence ("be sober"). Earlier we have shown that there is noteworthy unanimity in Greek lexicons and literature on the primary meaning of *nepho* as "be abstinent, drink no wine." This pattern of associating mental sobriety with physical abstinence is consistent in all the three usages of *nepho* in 1 Peter.

The admonition to "be abstinent" assumes a radical form in 1 Peter 1:13 because it is followed immediately by the adverb "*teleios*," which means "perfectly" or "completely." Thus, the correct translation is, "be completely or perfectly abstinent." Most translators, presumably because of their bias against abstinence, have chosen to use *teleios* to modify the following verb *elpisate* ("set your hope"), thus, rendering it "set your hope *fully"* (RSV) or "hope to the end" (KJV). But the idiom used elsewhere in the New Testament for "to the end" is not *teleios* per se, but a compound such as *mechri telous* or *heos telous* (Heb 3:6, 14; 1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:13).

Grammatically the adverb *teleios* can be used to modify either the preceding verb *nephontes* or the following verb *elpisate*, since in the Greek there is no punctuation that separates the adverb from the verb. A similar example is Jesus' statement, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with

me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Most translators and expositors have chosen to place the comma before rather than after "today," because of their belief in the survival of the soul apart from the body at the moment of death. Similarly in 1 Peter 1:13, most translators have chosen to put the comma before rather than after *teleios*, because of their belief that the Bible teaches moderation rather than total abstinence.

It is noteworthy that in the Vulgate, the famous Latin translation which has served as the official Catholic Bible throughout the centuries, Jerome translates *teleios* as a modifier of *nephontes*, thus, "*sobrii perfecte*" ("perfectly sober"). In my view Jerome’s translation reflects accurately the intent of Peter, who repeats his call to sobriety three times in his epistle. Thus, the correct translation should be: "Therefore gird up your minds, being wholly abstinent, set your hope upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 4:7. The verb *nepho* is used for the second time in 1 Peter 4:7: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane [*sophronesate*] and sober [*nepsate*] for your prayers." We noticed earlier, in our study of the term *sophron*, that here Peter exhorts Christians to keep mentally vigilant and physically abstinent. The meaning of *nepho* as abstinence from wine is suggested also by the context, where Peter contrasts the past life-style of "licentiousness, passions, *drunkenness*, revels, carousing and lawless idolatry" (1 Pet 4:3) with the new life-style of temperance and abstinence.

The passage may be paraphrased as follows: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be sober in mind and abstemious in life in order that you might be able to maintain a healthy devotional life at this critical time."

1 Peter 5:8. The third usage of *nepho* occurs in 1 Peter 5:8: "Be sober [*nepsate*], be watchful [*gregoresate*]. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour." Just as in the previous two instances, here also Peter associates mental vigilance with physical abstinence, because the two are mutually dependent. The language corresponds to 1 Thessalonians

dependent. The language corresponds to 1 Thessalonians 5:6, though Paul mentions first mental vigilance and second physical abstinence. The correlation between the two conditions is self-evident. Intoxicating drinks diminish the power of conscience and reason, thus weakening inhibitions to evil-doing. The ultimate result is that the Devil is better able "to devour," literally, "drink down" (*katapino*) such persons.

The contrast between *nepsate* (from *ne piein*, "not to drink") and *katapiein* (from *kata piein* "to drink down") has been recognized by Adam Clarke, who comments: "It is not every one that he can swallow down. Those who are sober and vigilant are proof against him; these he may not swallow down. Those who are drunk with the cares of this world, and are unwatchful, these he may swallow down. There is a beauty in this verse, and striking apposition between the first and last words, which I think have not been noticed;—Be sober, *nepsate*, from *ne* not, and *piein*, to drink—do not swallow down—and the word *katapien*, from *kata*, down, and *piein*, to drink. If you swallow strong drink down, the devil will swallow you down. Hear this, ye drunkards, topers, tipplers, or by whatsoever name ye are known in society, or among your fellow-sinners, strong drink is not only your way to the devil, but the devil's way into you. Ye are such as the devil particularly may swallow down."81

Correlation with Luke 12:41-46. Peter's exhortations to vigilance and abstinence appear to have been inspired by the parable of the *drunken* servant which *Christ spoke directly to Peter* (Luke 12:41). In that parable the faithful steward is commended for watching over his master's household while the unfaithful one is condemned for beginning "to eat and drink and get drunk" (Luke 12:43-45).

Allusions to this parable appear several times in 1 Peter. For example, 1 Peter 4:10 says, "as good stewards of God's varied grace." This is strikingly similar to Luke 12:42, "the faithful and wise steward whom his master will set over his household." Similarly 1 Peter 4:5, "him who is ready to judge the living and the dead," appears to be an echo of Luke 12:46, "The master of that servant will come

on a day when he does not expect him . . . and will punish him." Also 1 Peter 5:3, "Not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock" harks back to the unfaithful servant of Luke 12:45 who began "to beat the menservants and the maidservants."

The allusions in 1 Peter to Luke's parable of the unfaithful servant, who is caught *drunk* and punished by his returning master, strongly support the translation of *nepho* in its primary sense of abstaining from wine. Furthermore, the allusions help us understand why 1 Peter 1:13 would urge abstinence in radical terms: "*nephontes teleios*" ("be completely abstinent").

Summing up our study of the five usages of *nepho*, two by Paul (1 Thess 5:6, 8) and three by Peter (1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8), we can say that all show an amazing consistency in urging both mental vigilance and physical abstinence. Moreover, we have found that the primary meaning of *nepho* as abstinence from intoxicating beverages is supported in 1 Thessalonians by the contrasting parallel between the sons of the day who are sober and the sons of the night who are drunk. In 1 Peter, support for the abstinence meaning of *nepho* comes both from the allusions to the parable of the drunken servant of Luke 12 and from the context of 1 Peter 4:7, where the apostle refers to the past life-style of "drunkenness" (1 Pet 4:3). It is also significant that all five admonitions to abstinence are given in the context of preparation for the imminent return of Christ. To this point we shall return after examining the usage of the adjective *nephalion*.

4. *Nephalios* as Physical Abstinence

Three texts. The adjective *nephalios* occurs only three times in the New Testament. It is used by Paul in his description of the qualifications desired of bishops, women and older men. The first two instances occur in 1 Timothy 3:2, 11: "Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, *temperate* [*nephalion*], sensible [*sophrona*], dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard [*me paroinon*] . . . The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but *temperate* [*nephalious*], faithful in all things." The third instance is found in Titus 2:2, "Bid

in all things." The third instance is found in Titus 2:2, "Bid the older men be *temperate* [*nephalious*], serious, sensible [*sophronas*], sound in faith, in love and in steadfastness."

Earlier we noticed that *nephalios* occurs together with *sophron* in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 2:2, the first to denote physical abstinence and the second mental vigilance. Several commentators recognize that the connection between the two requires a literal interpretation of *nephalios*, as being abstinence from wine. Adam Clarke, for example, though himself a moderationist, offers this comment on 1 Timothy 3:2: "He must be *vigilant, nephaleos,* from *ne, not* and *pino,* to *drink*. *Watchful*; for as one who drinks is apt to *sleep*, so he who abstains from it is more likely to *keep awake*, and attend to his *work* and *charge*."82 Commenting on the same verse Albert Barnes says, "This word (*nephalios*) occurs only here and in verse 11; Titus 2:2. It means, properly, *sober, temperate, abstinent,* especially in respect to wine; then, *sober-minded*, watchful, circumspect."83

"No Drunkard." Some argue that the literal interpretation of *nephalios* as abstinent is contradicted by *me paroinos*, rendered "no drunkard" by the RSV. Their reasoning is that the latter negates the former. Paul could not have enjoined a bishop first to be abstinent and then "no drunkard," that is, moderate in the use of wine. This apparent contradiction can be resolved by recognizing that *me paroinos* does not necessarily imply moderation. In his word-by-word exposition of 1 Timothy 3:2, Jerome interprets *me paroinos* as totally abstinent. He writes: "'not a drunkard' *(non vinolentum*), for he who is constantly in the Holy of Holies and offers sacrifices, will not drink wine or strong drink, since wine is debauchery [*luxuria* —Eph 5:18]."84 For Jerome, *me paroinos* meant that like the priests in the Old Testament, the bishop must be totally abstinent.

Another resolution to the apparent contradiction can be found by recognizing that the meaning of *paroinos* goes beyond "addicted to wine, drunken"85 to the complementary idea of being "near wine," that is, near a place where wine is consumed. The word *paroinos* is

place where wine is consumed. The word *paroinos* is composed of *para*, "near," and *oinos*, "wine." "The ancient *paroinos*," as Lees and Burns explain, "was a man accustomed to attend drinking parties, and, as a consequence, to become intimately associated with strong drink."86

Understood in this sense, *paroinos* does not weaken *nephalios.* On the contrary, it strengthens it. What Paul is saying is that a bishop must be not only abstinent, but must also avoid places where wine was consumed. This fits well with Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 5:11, "I wrote to you not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, *drunkard*, or robber—not even to eat with such a one."

A similar admonition is found in the so-called *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, compiled in the fourth century from earlier canons. The 54th canon reads: "If any one of the clergy be taken eating in a tavern, let him be suspended, excepting when he is forced to bait at an inn upon the road."88 The reason for this injunction is presumably the concern over the public image of a clergyman seen eating in a tavern where people often got drunk. The same concern is apparent in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 where Paul mentions those qualities which affect first the bishop's personal example at home and then his public reputation before the church and society.

Dual Meaning of *Paroinos*. Albert Barnes, a respected commentator of the New Testament, specifically mentions the dual meaning of *paroinos*, saying: "The Greek word (*paroinos*) occurs in the New Testament only here [1 Tim 3:3] and in Titus 1:7. It means, properly, *by wine*; that is, spoken of what takes place *by* or *over* wine, as revelry, drinking-songs, etc. Then it denotes, as it does here, one who sits by wine; that is, who is in the habit of drinking it. . . . It means that one who is in the *habit* of drinking wine, or who is accustomed to sit with those who indulge in it, should not be admitted to the ministry. The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense; that he regarded it as dangerous and that he would

wish the ministers of religion to avoid it altogether."89

The meaning of *paroinos* as "near wine," that is, near a drinking place, is supported by ancient and modern Greek lexicons. The *Lexicon Graeci Testamenti Alphabeticum*, published in 1660, defines *paroinos* in Greek and Latin as "*para to oino*, *apud vinum*," which may be translated "near or in the presence of wine."90 Liddell and Scott define the related word *paroinios* as "befitting a drinking party."91 A colleague at Andrews University of Greek nationality, Dr. Elly Economou, alerted me to the fact that the meaning just given is still current in modern Greek. Her modern Greek-English lexicon defines *paroinos* as: "Drunken. Done (or said) in drinking (at table)."92 The only example given in the lexicon is "*paroinon asma*, a convivial song."93

In the light of the foregoing considerations Paul enjoins a Christian bishop (overseer) to be not only *nephalios*, that is, abstinent, but also *me paroinon*, that is, not present at drinking places or parties. The Christian minister must not only be himself abstinent, but he must also withhold his presence and sanction from places and associations which could tempt his abstinence or that of others.

Some will argue that this conclusion is negated by Paul's admonition to deacons to be "not addicted to much wine" (1 Tim 3:8; cf. Titus 2:3) and to Timothy, "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments" (1Tim 5:23). These texts will be examined together with a few others in Chapter 7, a chapter devoted specifically to an analysis of the few misunderstood texts regarding the use of alcoholic beverages. Our study will show that these texts substantiate rather than negate Paul's admonitions regarding abstinence.

The Reason for Abstinence. The reason given by Peter and Paul for living abstinent and godly lives is not just medical but eschatological. Healthful and holy living is commended in the Scripture not merely for the sake of personal health and goodness, but primarily for the sake of God's desire to dwell within us in this present life (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:13) and to fellowship with us in the life to come. The preparation to live in the holy presence of Christ at His

coming requires that we learn to live clean and godly lives now. This is the fundamental reason given by Paul in Titus, for admonishing not only bishops but also older men, older women, younger men and slaves to live sober and godly lives.

After admonishing each group individually, Paul gives this final and fundamental reason for his previous exhortations: "For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:11-14).

In this passage Paul appropriately connects the abstention from worldly passions with God's design for us to live sober-mindedly [*sophronos*], righteously and devoutly in this present world. We noticed earlier the close connection existing between mental sobriety and physical abstinence. The suppression of worldly passions presupposes the abstention from intoxicating beverages, since the latter contributes to the former. This is accomplished not merely through human effort but primarily through "the grace of God" which has appeared, not to sanction indulgence but to train us to avoid whatever interferes with the highest development of our Christian character. The purpose of God's grace, manifested through Jesus Christ, is not only "to redeem us" by paying the *penalty* of all our past iniquities, but also "to purify" us by providing *power* "to live sober, upright and godly lives," while awaiting "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

It is this hope of being ready to receive Christ, and to be received by Him on the day of His glorious appearing, that should motivate every Christian to "purify himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). It is to this hope that Peter also appeals when he urges mental vigilance and physical abstinence in those three texts considered earlier. His admonition to "gird up your minds, be completely abstinent" is followed immediately by the exhortation "set your hope upon the

grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:13). Similarly, in 1 Peter 4:7 the admonition to "keep sane and sober [abstinent]" is predicated on the fact that "the end of all things is at hand." The same is true of the exhortation to mental and physical sobriety in 1 Peter 5:8, which is preceded by the hope to "obtain the unfading crown of glory" on the day "when the chief Shepherd is manifested" (1 Pet 5:4).

For Christians like the Seventh-day Adventists, who accept the the Biblical teachings on the Second Advent literally rather than simply existentially—that is as a future realization of our present expectations rather than a present experience of the future—the apostolic admonition to abstain from intoxicating beverages assumes added significance. To be abstinent represents a tangible response to God’s invitation to make concrete preparation for the actual coming of our real Savior.

5. *Enkrateia* as Physical Abstinence

Meaning of *Enkrateia*. Closely related to *nephalios* is the Greek word *enkrateia* which is used five times in the New Testament (Acts 24:25; Gal 5:23; 2 Pet 1:6; 1 Cor 9:25; Titus 1:8). The word *enkrateia* derives its meaning from the stem *krat* which "expresses the power or lordship which one has either over oneself or over something."94 This power over oneself is especially manifested in the capacity to abstain from all forms of evil.

The RSV translates *enkrateia* consistently as "self-control" in 1 Corinthians 9:25 while the KJV renders it as "temperate." Some moderationists find in these texts a support for their view. Their reasoning is that the primary meaning of the Greek *enkrateia* and of the English "temperance" is not "total abstinence" but "moderation or discreetness" or "to resist all temptation to excess in anything."95

The truth of the matter is radically different. While the term "temperance" has come to mean in modern English "moderation," historically its primary meaning has been "abstinence." This is true for the English "temperance," the Latin "*temperantia*" and the Greek "*enkrateia*." Leon C.

Latin "*temperantia*" and the Greek "*enkrateia*." Leon C. Field provides an extensive historical documentation supportive of "abstinence" as the primary meaning of "temperance/*temperantia/enkrateia*."96 A similar documentation is provided by Walter Grundmann in his article on "*enkrateia*" in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.97 The reader is referred to these studies for ample documentation. For our immediate purpose we shall cite only a few texts by way of illustration.

Sample Texts. Sir Thomas Elyot, an English author of the sixteenth century, wrote in his *Governor* (1531): "He that is temperate, fleeth pleasure voluptuous and with the absence of them is not discontented, and from the presence of them he willingly *absteineth*."98 Similarly the philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1640) defines "temperance [as] the habit by which we *abstain* from all things that tend to our destruction; intemperance the contrary vice."99

The same meaning is found in Greek sources. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) says: "The self-restrained man [*enkrates*], knowing that his desires are bad, refuses to follow them on principle."100 The apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus has a section entitled "Temperance [*enkrateia*] of the Soul" which opens with these words: "Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself from thy appetites."101 Abstinence was highly esteemed among the Essenes. Josephus tells us, "These Essenes reject pleasure as an evil, but esteem abstinence [*enkrateian*], and the conquest over our passions, to be virtue."102 Perhaps the most conclusive proof of the abstinence connotation of *enkrateia* is the usage of the title "Encratites" to designate several early Christian groups who abstained from wine, flesh-meat, and some of them even from marriage.103

Abstinence in Acts 24:25. The New Testament writers retain the idea of abstinence in their use of *enkrateia*. The first occurrence of the word is in Acts 24:25 as one of the topics presented by Paul to Felix and Drusilla: "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance [*enkrateias*], and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (KJV). Felix was an unjust governor, addicted to licentious indulgence and living in adultery with Drusilla.

In view of the notorious cruelty and licentiousness of the guilty pair, it is evident that when Paul spoke to them of *enkrateia*, his theme was not moderation but abstinence from all unlawful and sinful practices.

Wycliffe correctly renders *enkrateia* in this text by "chastitie." This meaning is most evident in 1 Corinthians 7:9 where Paul uses the verbal form to describe the same virtue of chastity: "But if they cannot exercise self-control [*enkrateuomai*] they should marry."

Abstinence in 1 Corinthians 9:25. In the same epistle Paul uses the verb a second time in a way which clearly includes the idea of abstinence: "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things [*panta enkrateuetai*]. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (1 Cor 9:25, RSV). The KJV renders the verb in question "is temperate in all things."

Some appeal to this passage to defend the moderate use of alcoholic beverages. They believe that in this passage the apostle teaches Christians to be temperate, that is, moderate, in the use of all things including alcoholic beverages. This represents a misinterpretation of the text which has been influenced by inaccurate modern translations. The older translations recognize that the true meaning of the verb in this passage is abstinence, not moderation. The Latin Vulgate renders it "*ab omnibus se abstinet* " ("he abstains himself from all things"). Wycliffe has the same rendering, "absteyneth hym fro alle thingis." Tyndale, Cranmer and the Geneva version follow the same translation.

This meaning is supported by the allusion to the training of athletes for the ancient games. Commentators give abundant illustrative references from ancient authors. Adam Clarke, for example, quotes the stoic philosopher Epictetus (about A.D. 100) who wrote: "Do you wish to gain the prize at the Olympic games? Consider the requisite preparations and the consequences: You must observe a strict regimen; must live on food which you dislike; you must abstain from all delicacies; must exercise yourself at the necessary and prescribed times both in heat and cold; you must drink nothing cooling; *take no wine*

as formerly."104

In his *De Arte Poetica* Horace has the famous lines which Francis translates as follows: "The youth who hopes the Olympic price to gain, All arts must try, and every toil sustain; The extremes of heat and cold must often prove; And shun the weakening joys of wine and love [*Abstinuit Venere et Bacco*—literally, "he abstains from love and wine"]."105

In light of what we know about the rigorous abstinent life-style of ancient athletes, Paul's phrase *panta enkrateuetai* can be rendered correctly as "he abstains from all [harmful] things." This meaning is recognized by several commentators. Walter Grundmann explains that the verb under discussion in 1 Corinthians 9:25 "simply tells us that for the sake of the goal toward which he strives . . . he [the athlete] *refrains* from all the things which might offend or hamper."106 Similarly F. W. Grosheide comments that the meaning of the verb is "[he] trains himself by doing or *taking nothing* that would harm."107

In the very next verses Paul illustrates this meaning by making a personal application. Continuing with the image of the athlete, he says, "Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor 9:26-27). Such language scarcely supports the moderation view of temperance as a prudent use of intoxicating beverages. It rather implies a stern, self-denying discipline. It implies that to qualify for acceptance as citizens of heaven, we must subdue our craving for intoxicating substances by the power of divine grace (Phil 4:13).

Abstinence in other Passages. The idea of abstinence is also present in the other passages in which *enkrateia* occurs. We shall make only a brief reference to them. In Galatians 5:22 this word stands as the completion and crown of the fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control [*enkrateia*]; against such there is no law." The fruit of the Spirit, including the last named, stands in opposition to the "works of the flesh"

last named, stands in opposition to the "works of the flesh" enumerated in the preceding verse and among which "drunkenness" is prominent. This suggests that *enkrateia* is seen by Paul especially as the antithesis of drunkenness.

In 2 Peter 1:6 *enkrateia* occurs among the list of virtues, sometimes called "Peter's ladder," and is rendered "self-control" in the RSV. The Vulgate renders it *abstinentia*, and Wycliffe "absteynence." The adjective form *enkrate* occurs once in Titus 1:8 where it corresponds to *nephalion* ("abstinent") in 1 Timothy 3:2.

From this survey it is clear that the admonitions to sobriety and temperance in the New Testament call for a moderate use of all good things and total abstinence from all that is injurious. Applied to alcoholic beverages, the New Testament teaches total abstinence. Our study of the apostolic exhortations to sobriety expressed through the terms *sophron, nepho, nephalios,* and *enkrateia* has shown that these terms complement one another in emphasizing the Christian calling to mental vigilance and physical abstinence.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion emerging from the investigation conducted in this chapter into the apostolic teachings regarding alcoholic beverages is abundantly clear. Contrary to the prevailing perception, the New Testament is amazingly consistent in its teaching of abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages.

We have found that the texts commonly used to support the moderationist view provide no support to such a view. On the contrary, some of them openly contradict the moderationist view.

The irony of the charge in Acts 2:13 that the apostles were drunk on *gleukos*, that is, grape juice, their common beverage, provides an indirect but important proof of their abstinent life-style and inferentially of the life-style of their Master.

Paul's reference to "drunkenness" at the Communion table of the Corinthian church (1 Cor 11:21) offers no support for a moderate use of alcoholic wine, because whatever was done at Corinth was a departure from the instructions Paul had delivered to the church. Thus, their conduct constitutes a warning rather than an example for us. Furthermore, our study of the meaning of the verb *methuo* ("satiated") and of the implications of Paul's admonitions suggests quite clearly that the problem at Corinth was indulgence in eating rather than intoxication with alcoholic wine.

The intent of Paul's admonition in Ephesians 5:18 ("Do not get drunk with wine") is not to sanction the moderate use of wine, but to show the irreconcilable contrast between the spirit of wine and presence of the Holy Spirit. The structure of the passage, as well as the possible connection between "wine" and the relative clause—recognized by many ancient and modern translations—makes this text one of the most powerful Biblical indictments against intoxicating wine.

The apostolic admonitions to sobriety and temperance call for a moderate use of all good things and total abstinence from all that is harmful. Our study of the Greek terms (*sophron, nepho, nephalios,* and *enkrateia*) used in the apostolic admonitions has shown how these terms complement one another in emphasizing the Christian need for both mental vigilance and physical abstinence from intoxicating substances such as alcoholic beverages. The fundamental reason given by Peter and Paul for their call to a life of vigilance and abstinence is eschatological, namely, preparation to live in the holy presence of Christ at His soon coming.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI

1. Rom 14:21; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:8; 5:23; Titus 2:3; Rev 6:6; 14:8; 14:10; 16:19; 17:2; 18:3, 13; 19:15.

2. See discussion in Stephen M. Reynolds, *Alcohol and the Bible* (Little Rock, Arkansas, 1983), p. 52.

3. See, for example, the Greek lexicons of E. Robinson and Dean Alford, s. v. "*Gleukos.*"

4. Philo, *On Drunkenness* 36.

5. Pliny, *Natural History* 14, 11, 83.

6. See, for example, Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon,* 1968 edition, s. v. "*Gleukos;*" James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, s. v. "*Gleukos*;" Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s. v. "*Gleukos*;" also the commentaries of R. H. Lenski and Albert Barnes on Acts 2:13. For a list of additional authors, see William Patton, *Bible Wines. Laws of Fermentatation* (Oklahoma City, n.d.), pp. 93-95.

7. Horace Bumstead, "The Biblical Sanction of Wine," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 38 (January 1881): 81.

8. Ibid., p. 62.

9. Ernest Gordon, *Christ, the Apostles and Wine. An Exegetical Study* (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 20.

10. Horace Bumstead (n. 7), p. 81.

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103. Some of the early Christian writers mentioning the Encratites are Irenaeus, *Against Hereses* 1, 28; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7, 17; Hippolytus,

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